

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE



SSC Meeting Report

January 27, 2014

**VERSION
Final**

PURPOSE

Topics to address during this meeting:

- Wreckfish Assessment Peer Review Process

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Documents:

- Attachment 1. SAFMC Peer Review Policy
- Attachment 2. Wreckfish Assessment Proposal
- Attachment 3. Wreckfish Proposal Review
- Attachment 4. Wreckfish Assessment Workshop Report
- Attachment 5. Draft Review TORs

*** Indicates documents not available for the first Briefing Book.**

Participants:

SSC Members

Luiz Barbieri
Carolyn Belcher
Jim Berkson
John Boreman
Jeff Buckel
Steve Cadrin
Scott Crosson
Churchill Grimes
Yan Jiao
Eric Johnson
Marcel Reichert
Douglas Vaughan
John Whitehead
Tracy Yandle

Others

Doug Butterworth
Robin Frede
Jim Freeman
Shaun Gehan
Rusty Hudson
Adam Lytton
Ken Stump

SAFMC Members and Staff

Julia Byrd
John Carmichael
Michelle Duval
Mike Errigo
Julie Neer
Gregg Waugh

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Documents

Agenda

1.2. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

Approve Minutes

SSC Discussion and Recommendations

This meeting was held via webinar.

The agenda was approved, with one modification to withhold approval of minutes of the October 2013 meeting until the April 2014 SSC meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is provided two opportunities to comment on SSC agenda items during this meeting. The first at the start of the meeting, and the final is at the end during the review of recommendations.

3. WRECKFISH ASSESSMENT REVIEW APPROACH

3.1. Documents

Attachment 1. SAFMC Peer Review Policy

Attachment 2. Wreckfish Assessment Proposal

Attachment 3. Wreckfish Proposal Review

Attachment 4. Wreckfish Assessment Workshop Report

Attachment 5. Draft Review TORs

3.2. Overview

An assessment of the South Atlantic Wreckfish resource is in preparation by Dr. Douglas Butterworth and colleagues. The SSC became aware of this effort in October 2012 when preliminary results were presented. To ensure a rigorous process and equal treatment of all assessments, regardless of preparing entity or submitter, the South Atlantic Council approved a peer review process which has provided guidance to subsequent wreckfish assessment efforts (Attachment 1).

Dr. Butterworth submitted a proposal for the assessment, in accordance with the peer review guidelines of the Council (Attachment 2). The SSC reviewed the proposal during a webinar meeting held September 3, 2013 (Attachment 3). The Council supported the submitter's request to develop model alternatives through a workshop, resulting in an *ad*

hoc group of SSC members meeting with the assessment preparers November 12 - 14, 2013, in Charleston, SC for a wreckfish Assessment Workshop. This group provided guidance to the assessment preparers as detailed in Attachment 4, including a schedule of events for completing the assessment for consideration by the SSC in April, 2014. This meeting is being held to address details of the Peer Review of the Wreckfish Assessment. The SSC is asked to recommend Peer Review Terms of Reference, Peer Reviewers, and possible dates for a peer review workshop to be held via Webinar.

The Council will consider the SSC recommendations when it meets March 3-7, 2014. The Council was briefed at its December 2013 on the timing of events necessary to complete this review for consideration by the SSC in April, and is aware that some planning activities may begin prior to final Council approval. Council leadership will be informed of the outcome of this meeting as soon as the report is provided by the SSC Chair.

Summary Schedule of Events

(leading to Council consideration of Wreckfish fishing level recommendations in June 2014):

- 1) SSC webinar meeting in late January/early February (This Meeting)
Recommend TORs, Reviewers, Review date
- 2) Council Approves TORs and schedule, appoints reviewers: March 2014
- 3) Review held week of March 17 – 21, 2014
- 4) SSC review and fishing level recommendations: April 2014.
- 5) Council considers fishing level recommendations: June 2014.

3.3. Action

1) Peer Review Terms of Reference

The SSC is provided draft Terms of Reference based on those used for SEDAR Benchmark Assessment Peer Reviews (Attachment 5). These may be approved as is, or modified as desired by the SSC.

2) Peer Review Approach

Council Peer Review Guidelines allow in-person or electronic meetings for peer reviews. The assessment workshop group recommended a webinar review of this assessment. The Council supported the webinar approach, based on reduced costs and added flexibility to accommodate the tight scheduling necessary to meet the April SSC meeting.

The SSC is asked to recommend a peer review approach.

3) Peer Review Panel

Council Peer Review Guidelines state that Peer Reviews should be conducted by a panel appointed by the Council, similar to the approach used for SEDAR workshops, with the

Panel chaired by an SSC representative. Guidelines further state that reviewers may include SSC members, State and Federal agency scientists, university researchers, or other experts as deemed appropriate and qualified.

The SSC is asked to recommend Peer Reviewers and a Review Panel Chair. Peer Reviewers must be independent, and therefore those who participated in the Assessment Workshop are ineligible. Assessment Workshop participants were Anne Lange, Marcel Reichert, George Sedberry, and Doug Vaughan.

Dr. Marcel Reichert has expressed interest in chairing the Review. As the chair fills facilitation and organizing role, rather than a technical review role, Peer Review Chairs are not under the stringent independence requirements of the Reviewers.

4) Peer Review Timing

Timing for the Peer Review was discussed during the Assessment workshop and December Council Meeting. The Week of March 17 - 21 is recommended for the review. This week follows the March SAFMC meeting, when final approval will be requested for the TORs and Reviewers, while still allowing time for completion of the Peer Review Workshop Report in time to meet SSC document distribution guidelines.

SSC Discussion and Recommendations

The SSC reviewed the proposed Terms of Reference. Additional language was added to the TORs to include consideration of the datasets and methods addressed in the initial assessment proposal. The SSC agreed that the TORs, as modified, be forwarded to the Council for final approval. Final TORs are included as Appendix 1 to this report.

The SSC supported conducting the Peer Review through a series of webinar meetings to be held over several days.

The SSC recommended that Marcel Reichert be appointed to Chair the Peer Review, that Luiz Barbieri and Steve Cadrin be appointed as Peer Reviewers, and that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center be invited to appoint a reviewer from SEFSC staff.

The SSC, as well as the candidate reviewers and assessment analyst, supported conducting the peer review during the week of March 17 - 21, 2014.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

SSC Discussion and Recommendations

No other business was brought before the Committee.

5. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW, PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is provided an additional opportunity to comment on SSC recommendations and agenda items.

The Committee is provided an opportunity to review its report and final recommendations.

The Final SSC report should be provided to the Council by 9 am on Tuesday, February 11, 2014, for inclusion in the first briefing book for the March Council meeting.

6. NEXT MEETINGS

6.1. SAFMC SSC MEETINGS

April 2014

SSC Assessment Planning Workshop, 1pm 4/28 - 12pm 4/29

SSC Meeting: 1 pm 4/29 - 3 pm 5/1

Crowne Plaza, Tanger Blvd., North Charleston SC

October 2014

SSC ABC Control Rule Workshop, 1pm 10/27 - 12pm 10/28

SSC Meeting: 1 pm 10/28 - 3 pm 10/30

Crowne Plaza, Tanger Blvd., North Charleston SC

6.2. Social and Economic Panel

April 2014

SEP Meeting, 1 - 5 pm on 4/28

6.3. SAFMC MEETINGS

2014 Council Meetings

March 3- 7, Savannah GA

June 9 - 13, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

September 15 - 19, Charleston SC

December 1 - 5, New Bern, NC

7. ADJOURN

8. APPENDICES

8.1. Recommended Wreckfish Peer Review TORS

Wreckfish Assessment Peer Review Terms of Reference

1. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of data sources, and address the following:
 - a) Are data decisions documented, consistent with the initial proposal and working group recommendations (or deviations documented), and are they sound and robust?
 - b) Are data uncertainties acknowledged, reported, and within normal or expected levels?
 - c) Are data applied properly within the assessment model?
 - d) Are input data series reliable and sufficient to support the assessment approach and findings?

2. Evaluate the methods used to assess the stock, considering strengths and weaknesses of the approach and taking into account the available data.
 - a) Are methods scientifically sound and robust, and consistent with the initial proposal and working group recommendations (or deviations documented)?
 - b) Are assessment models configured properly and used consistent with standard practices?
 - c) Are the methods appropriate for the available data?

3. Evaluate the assessment findings with respect to the following:
 - a) Are abundance, exploitation, and biomass estimates reliable, consistent with input data and population biological characteristics, and useful to support status inferences?
 - b) Is the stock overfished? What information helps you reach this conclusion?
 - c) Is the stock undergoing overfishing? What information helps you reach this conclusion?
 - d) Is there an informative stock recruitment relationship? Is the stock recruitment curve reliable and useful for evaluation of productivity and future stock conditions?

- e) Are the quantitative estimates of the status determination criteria for this stock reliable? If not, are there other indicators that may be used to inform managers about stock trends and conditions?
4. Evaluate the stock projections, considering the strengths and weaknesses of approaches and available information, and consider the following:
 - a) Are the methods consistent with accepted practices and available data?
 - b) Are the methods appropriate for the assessment model and outputs?
 - c) Are the results informative and robust, and useful to support inferences of probable future conditions?
 - d) Are key uncertainties acknowledged, discussed, and reflected in the projection results ?
 5. Consider how uncertainties in the assessment, and their potential consequences, are addressed.
 - a) Comment on the degree to which methods used to evaluate uncertainty reflect and capture the significant sources of uncertainty in the population, data sources, and assessment methods
 - b) Ensure that the implications of uncertainty in technical conclusions are clearly stated.
 6. Consider the research recommendations and make any additional recommendations or prioritizations warranted.
 - a) Clearly denote research and monitoring that could improve the reliability of, and information provided by, future assessments.
 - b) Provide recommendations on possible ways to improve the SEDAR process.
 7. Provide guidance on key improvements in data or modeling approaches which should be considered when scheduling the next assessment.
 8. Prepare a Peer Review Summary summarizing the Panel's evaluation of the stock assessment and addressing each Term of Reference.