

Protected Resources Committee
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
March 2015, St Simons GA

The South Atlantic Council would like to enter into an ESA/MSA Integration Agreement with the Southeast Regional Office. The Agreement would clarify procedures for Council involvement in each step of the formal consultation process; role of SERO Protected Resources staff in the IPT process; expectations of SERO Protected Resources staff in communicating and informing the Council during Protected Resources Committee meetings; and communication standards between Council staff and SERO Protected Resources staff.

While some agreements and activities already exist between the SAFMC and SERO PRD, the Agreement will clearly lay out how the Council and SERO will work together to improve communication and make the best use of the Council's knowledge in formal consultations.

Draft List of Items for the ESA/MSA Integration Agreement

1. Council involvement in Formal Consultations
 - A. Preliminary
 - B. During the consultation
 - i. Updates at Council meetings on the progress
 - ii. Council input on RPA/RPMs
 - iii. Council/SSC review of data
 - C. Biological Opinion
 - i. Council review of draft opinion
 - a. Upon Council request at the beginning of consultation
2. Role of Protected Resources Staff in the IPT Process
 - A. Continue existing involvement of PR staff on IPT, IPT calls, etc.
 - B. Provide input on alternatives in early stages of development (specifically if an alternative will trigger a formal consultation and timing considerations)
 - C. Adhering to deadlines for writing assignments
 - D. Other?
3. Protected Resources staff involvement at Committee/Council meetings
 - A. Continue existing agreement to update Council on PR-related issues in the SA
 - B. Point of Contact on PR Staff who updates Council staff on any emerging PR-related issue, answers/delegates questions, etc.
 - C. Others?