SAFMC Seminar Series Proposal

John Carmichael & Chip Collier

February 10, 2021

Introduction

Communicating new findings and methods to South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), and Advisory Panel members is important to the management process. However, finding adequate time on the agendas of the various Council groups can be challenging, and ensuring that technical information is vetted through the SSC before being presented to the Council can add to scheduling difficulties. Additional challenges experienced in the past include technical information being presented to the Council before it is deemed reliable and useful by the SSC, inadequate time for consideration of information, limited opportunities for presentation to Advisory Panels, and excessive time expected of presenters when asked to come before multiple Council bodies.

In August 2020, the Council sponsored a seminar on dolphin tagging research via a webinar. Members of the SSC and Dolphin Wahoo AP, the public, and the Council were all invited to attend and share in the presentation and discussion. The joint nature of this meeting helped keep these three critical components of the Council process "on the same page" as each benefitted from the questions and perspectives of the other. The researchers did not need to travel to three meetings to give the same presentation to adequately inform the relevant Council groups. The webinar format allowed such a meeting to be held without the constraints of travel costs and scheduling difficulties.

The seminar is intended to open discussion on the reliability and usefulness of data or an analytical method prior to use in management, and to serve as the first step in reviewing such information. In the past, new research was often provided to the Council or an advisory panel prior to review by the SSC. This resulted in a delay in the use of the data or method until review by the SSC. In some instances, the information was not considered reliable by the SSC upon review, thereby creating confusion at the Council. The seminar series will allow new information to be presented more regularly (monthly outside of Council meeting months), provide an opportunity for preliminary SSC review, and enable Council members to request a thorough and formal review by the SSC if desired. If requested, the reliability and usefulness of the data or method would be reviewed at an upcoming SSC meeting, potentially reducing the time to incorporate the new information into management by up to six months.

We do not anticipate difficulties in identifying topics and speakers. Council staff are often approached by researchers interested in sharing work that is relevant to Council species and management issues. In addition, most grant programs encourage recipients to conduct outreach activities on their findings. Since Council needs are often cited as

justification of the importance of proposed studies, the Council is an obvious venue for the required outreach and dissemination of findings.

The following process builds on the earlier experience and proposes a formal seminar series that can be made available for presenting and discussing a variety of current issues important to the Council.

Title: SAFMC Scientific Seminar Series

Purpose: Provide an efficient approach for presenting technical and scientific information to the Council and its Advisors.

Approach: Public Webinar hosted by the Council

- Noticed on the Website, published in the FR, announced through standard Council channels

- Presentation available 2 weeks prior to a seminar

   o The presentation and supporting documentation (i.e., journal article or grant report) will be posted to the website.

Schedule: Pre-determined, on a set day-week of the month through the year

- Propose the Second Tuesday of each month, 3-5 pm.

- Except March – June – Sept – Dec (Council meeting months)

- Noticed on the website (likely with a dedicated page in the new design)

Primary Staff: Deputy Director for Science (Collier) and Data Analyst (Errigo)

Other Staff: Outreach and Communication, for posting and announcing

                     Host Staff as needed, based on the topic

Topics Selection: Based on suggestions by staff, Advisors and Council, requests by researchers

- Primary staff will maintain a list of scheduled symposia and requested topics

- Executive Committee will approve topics as needed during March and September meetings

Process:

- Staff "Host" for the seminar will introduce the presenters and topic

- Presentation of 30 mins to 1hr

- Questions taken on the presented information
  - Moderated by the Host.
    - In the interest of time and relevance, questions that go beyond the presentation and veer into Council actions or decisions will be considered out of order in this process and not addressed.
  - Priority to Council members, SSC, AP
  - Questions taken from the general audience if time allows

Next Steps: Following the seminar, the appropriate committee chair, Council Chair, and Council Vice Chair may direct that the topic or paper be remanded to the SSC for formal review and a recommendation on BSIA.

Table 1. Preliminary seminar topics.

Proposed Topic	Coordinating Staff (Host)	Council Committee	Timeframe
Red Snapper diet composition using DNA barcoding of fish prey (Recent MARMAP study)	MB	SG	March/April
Deepwater Coral ecosystem research (H&E Committee direction, after March 2021)	RP	HE	Spring
Bag Limit Analysis Research Seminar	CW/CC	SG + DW	Spring
Electronic Reporting Research (including MFC) (Nick Smillie, Masters Student C of C)	JB	CS	Summer
Red Porgy Habitat (MARMAP)	RP	HE	TBD
Dolphin Telemetry/SPAWG	JH	DW	TBD
Dolphin Participatory Workshop Findings	JH/JB	CS + DW	TBD
CitSci Program Overview	JB	CS	TBD
Management Regulations Evaluation	AI	SG	TBD
South Atlantic Red Snapper Count	MB	SG	Spring 2023
Greater Amberjack Count	ME	SG	Spring 2023