

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Full Council Session I (Closed Session)
December 8, 2025

The Council met in Closed Session on Monday, December 8, 2025, and discussed the following items:

Advisory Panel Selection - Review of Applications and Recommendations for Appointment

The Council reviewed applicants for open seats on the Law Enforcement, Mackerel Cobia, and Spiny Lobster Advisory Panels and *provided the following draft motions as recommendations for consideration by the Council during open session:*

MOTION 1: APPOINT BOB ZALES TO THE LAW ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: REAPPOINT CHARLES LOCKE AND THOMAS NEWMAN AND APPOINT LYNN GOKEY TO THE MACKEREL COBIA ADVISORY PANEL
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: APPOINT NATHAN EVERETT AND CORY GWINN AS THE MAFMC REPRESENTATIVES ON THE MACKEREL COBIA ADVISORY PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: REAPPOINT SEAN ESPENSHIP, GARY NICHOLS, JUSTIN SMITH, AND MIMI STAFFORD AND APPOINT JOHN GRECO III TO THE SPINY LOBSTER ADVISORY PANEL. READVERTISE AN OPEN SEAT ON THE AP (WITH THE INTENT OF APPOINTING A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE CAROLINAS).
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: APPOINT DANIEL ROYSER AS THE NCDMF REPRESENTATIVE ON THE HABITAT AND ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: APPOINT TRACEY DUNN AS THE LAW ENFORCEMENT ADVISORY PANEL REPRESENTATIVE AND VINCENT BONURA AS THE SNAPPER GROUPER ADVISORY PANEL REPRESENTATIVE ON THE WRECKFISH ADVISORY PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

SEDAR Assessment Technical Team

Under the new Assessment phase of the SEDAR process, an Assessment Technical Team made up of individuals with relevant scientific expertise and fishing experience would be available to provide feedback and guidance to the SEFSC analyst during stock assessment model

development. Assessment Technical Team members will be chosen by the Science Center with representatives recommended by Council staff. Members may include SSC and AP representatives, state agency scientists, university researchers, and others with relevant expertise and experience.

SEDAR Panel and SSC Workgroup Appointments

The Council reviewed the list of upcoming SEDAR panels and active SSC workgroups, and appointed SSC members to fill seats on these groups. *The Council provided the following draft motions as recommendations for consideration by the Council during open session:*

MOTION 7: APPOINT WALTER BUBLEY, FRED SCHARF, AND LUIZ BARBIERI TO THE SEDAR 106: SOUTH ATLANTIC GAG GROUPER TOPICAL WORKING GROUP.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 8: APPOINT GENNY NESSLAGE AS CHAIR (WITH MARCEL REICHERT AS ALTERNATE), AND CHRIS DUMAS AND ALEXEI SHAROV AS SSC REVIEWERS TO THE SEDAR 90: SOUTH ATLANTIC RED SNAPPER REVIEW PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 9: APPOINT KAI LORENZEN, ALEXEI SHAROV, AND JIE CAO TO THE (JOINT WITH GULF) MSY PROXIES WORKGROUP.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 10: APPOINT MARCEL REICHERT AS CHAIR AND LUIZ BARBIERI AS SSC REVIEWER FOR THE SOUTH ATLANTIC RED SNAPPER RESEARCH PROJECT REVIEW PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 11: APPOINT LUIZ BARBIERI AS CHAIR AND STEVE TURNER AND MARCEL REICHERT AS SSC REVIEWERS FOR THE GREATER AMBERJACK INDEPENDENT ESTIMATE PROJECT REVIEW PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

ESA Section 7 Shrimp Workgroup Appointments

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation process requires consideration of ways to reduce and minimize bycatch and bycatch mortality of giant manta ray and smalltooth sawfish in shrimp fisheries. The Council requested the formation of a workgroup comprised of biological experts, fishery stakeholders, and management personnel to address this requirement. The Council reviewed the list of members and *provided the following draft motion as a recommendation for consideration by the Council during open session:*

MOTION 12: APPOINT THOSE IN THE TABLE BELOW TO THE ESA SECTION 7 SHRIMP WORKGROUP. ALSO APPOINT SOMEONE FROM THE SEFSC TO THIS WORKGROUP (NAME WILL BE PROVIDED AT A LATER DATE).
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Name	Affiliation	State
Carolyn Belcher	SAFMC	GA
Charlie Phillips	SAFMC	GA
Allie Iberle	SAFMC Staff	
Christina Curtis	SAFMC Staff	
Chip Collier	SAFMC Staff	
Jennifer Lee	NOAA	
Sarah Roberts	NOAA	
Robert (Bob) Zales	Industry	FL
Mike Merrifield	Industry	FL
Laurilee Thompson	Industry	FL
Gregg Poulakis	FL-FWCC	FL
Jared Flowers	GA-DNR, SSC	GA
Bryan Fluech	GA-SeaGrant	GA
Graham Wagner	SC-DNR	SC
Chris Stewart	NC-DMF	NC
Chuck Bangley	NC-DMF	NC
Blake Price	Southern Shrimp Alliance	
Jessica Pate	Marine Megafauna Foundation	

SSC Appointments

The North Carolina state agency (NCDMF) designated seat appointee on the SSC submitted a letter of resignation to the SSC in November due to changes in job duties at the agency. NC DMF identified a new designee for this seat and this individual submitted an application for the SSC. The Council reviewed the application for the designated North Carolina state SSC seat and *provided the following draft motion as a recommendation for consideration by the Council during open session:*

MOTION 13: APPOINT MATTHEW DAMIANO TO THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE AGENCY DESIGNATED SEAT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE. APPROVED BY COUNCIL

SSC and SEP Optimization

At the June 2025 meeting, the Council directed staff to evaluate the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Social and Economic Panel (SEP) seats and committee size to ensure Council needs are being met and the committee size is optimized. The Council reviewed the membership and composition of the SSC and SEP during the closed session and elected to maintain the current composition and size of these committees until the next round of appointments. The Council directed staff to consider SSC/SEP optimization strategies for the next round of appointments during the June 2026 meeting.

Executive Director Review

The Council also conducted the annual review of the Executive Director during the Closed Session.

DIRECTION TO STAFF

- Readvertise an open seat on the Spiny Lobster AP.
- Send notification letters to appointees and email notifications to those not selected by December 20, 2025.
- Conduct an orientation for new AP and SSC members before the March 2026 SAFMC meeting.
- Advertise open seats on advisory panels for consideration by the Council during the June 2026 Council meeting.
- Consider SSC/SEP optimization strategies for the next round of appointments during the June 2026 meeting.

Other Business

A Council member introduced discussion of modifications to the Council's parental leave policy. Council members directed staff to collect information on other Councils' policies and bring this topic before the Executive Committee to review and develop a recommendation.