



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Dr. Michelle Duval, Chair | Charlie Phillips, Vice Chair
Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

Agenda

Protected Resources Committee

March 7, 2016

Westin Jekyll Island

110 Ocean Way

Jekyll Island, GA

The Protected Resources Committee will meet to discuss South Atlantic protected species and receive updates on associated regulatory/management actions that the Council should be knowledgeable of when managing South Atlantic fisheries. SERO Protected Resource Division (PRD) staff will report on (1) protected resources-related updates for the South Atlantic region and (2) Right Whale Critical Habitat Final Rule. Council staff will brief the Committee on (3) the draft ESA/MSA Integration Agreement. Following, the Council will be briefed by US Fish and Wildlife Service and/or ASMFC staff on the status updates for (4) Atlantic Sturgeon, and the Red Knot. The Committee will discuss potential action for each item, provide guidance to staff, and address issues under Other Business as needed.

1. South Atlantic Protected Resource-Related Updates (Attachment 1)

Staff from the SERO Protected Resources Division (PRD) will provide the Committee with an update on protected resources issues in the South Atlantic region.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide input on the updates, discuss, and take action as necessary.

2. Right Whale Critical Habitat Final Rule (Attachment 2)

A Final Rule for Right Whale Critical Habitat was published by NMFS on January 27, 2016. Right Whale Critical Habitat was expanded in the Southeast to include nearshore and offshore waters from Cape Fear, North Carolina south to 27 nautical miles south of Cape Canaveral, Florida. SERO PRD Staff will give a presentation on the critical habitat expansion.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

3. ESA/MSA Integration Agreement (Attachment 3)

In January 2015, NMFS released a policy directive on ESA/MSA Integration. The directive implemented recommendations from the ESA Working Group, which was convened by the

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) and the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) to make recommendations on how to improve the involvement of regional fishery management councils in the ESA section 7 consultation process. The ESA Working Group also provided recommendations on how to improve transparency in data used for ESA jeopardy determinations, but these will be addressed by NMFS in a separate document.

Council staff presented a draft ESA/MSA Integration Agreement to the Council in June, September, and December. Council, NOAA General Counsel, and SERO PRD staffs are continuing to work on the Integration Agreement. The Committee will discuss items and topics included in the latest draft (**Attachment 3**) Integration Agreement between the South Atlantic Council and SERO PRD in regards to coordination with and involvement of the Council in Section 7 consultations.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review draft Integration Agreement and adopt if approved.

4. Updates on Atlantic Sturgeon, and Red Knot Listing

Dr. Wilson Laney, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and/or Bob Beal, Executive Director of ASMFC, will give an update on the Atlantic Sturgeon stock assessment, and Red Knot listing conducted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Critical Habitat designation for Red Knot is in preparation.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

Protected Resources Committee

Wilson Laney, Chair

Jessica McCawley, Vice-Chair

Mark Brown

Zack Bowen

Jack Cox

Michelle Duval

LTJG Tara Pray

Robert Beal

Attachments

Attachment 1: Protected Resources Updates for the South Atlantic (2nd BB)

Attachment 2: Right Whale Critical Habitat Final Rule

Attachment 3: Draft ESA/MSA Integration Agreement for SAFMC/SERO PRD (2nd BB)