

**FINAL**  
**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**PROTECTED RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
**Charleston, SC**  
**September 18, 2019**

The Committee approved minutes from the March 2017 meeting and the agenda.

**Council/NMFS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Council staff reviewed the current Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 and Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) Integration Agreement. The directive implemented recommendations from the ESA Working Group (convened by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee and the Council Coordination Committee) on how to improve the involvement of regional fishery management councils in the ESA section 7 consultation process. The Committee reviewed the different levels of involvement that may be requested for consultations and work products that could be reviewed by the Council (draft reasonable and prudent alternatives/measures and draft biological opinion).

**Update on Biological Opinions for Dolphin Wahoo and HMS Fisheries**

SERO Protected Resources Division (PRD) staff updated the Committee on the status of the Dolphin Wahoo and HMS Biological Opinions (BiOps). The Dolphin Wahoo BiOp is in the beginning stages, PRD staff is working with SERO Sustainable Fisheries staff to gather information for the consultation and biological assessment. Focus will be on characterizing the Dolphin Wahoo fishery, including unique characteristics of non-HMS vessels that target dolphin wahoo with pelagic longline gear (hook size utilized etc.) The BiOp will consider actions that are reasonably certain to occur. The full timeline for the HMS BiOps is currently unknown due to the need to analyze effects on newly listed species including Oceanic Whitetip Shark, Giant Manta Ray, and Bryde's Whale in the Gulf of Mexico.

**Updates on Other Protected Resource Issues**

SERO PRD provided the Committee with an update on protected resources issues in the South Atlantic, including: revised ESA section 4 and section 7 regulations, the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team consensus on measures to reduce impacts of fixed gear fisheries on large whales, the North Atlantic Right Whale unusual mortality event, the Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan proposed rule development, and the consensus recommendations from the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan relative to North Carolina gillnet fisheries.

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Note: Council staff drafts the timing and task motion based on Committee action. If points require clarification, they will be added to the draft motion. The Committee should review this wording carefully to be sure it accurately reflects their intent prior to making the motion.

**Timing and Task(s)**

**MOTION # 1. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:**

1. Work with SERO PRD to provide information relative to the Dolphin Wahoo BiOp, as necessary, and follow the progress of BiOp development.

**APPROVED BY COUNCIL**