

**FINAL**  
**Summary of the Protected Resources Committee**  
**December 3, 2013**  
**Hilton Wilmington Riverside**  
**Wilmington, NC**

**Members**

David Cupka, Chair  
Anna Beckwith  
Michelle Duval

Wilson Laney, Vice-Chair  
LT Morgan Fowler  
John Jolley

The agenda was adopted, and the minutes of the September 2013 meeting were approved.

**Ongoing ESA Consultations**

The Committee received an update from Andy Herndon, SERO Protected Resources Division, on two ongoing formal consultations for fisheries managed by the South Atlantic Council. Currently a formal consultation is underway for the Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) fishery, triggered by the listing of the Carolina and South Atlantic distinct population segments (DPSs) of Atlantic sturgeon as endangered under the ESA in 2012. The biological opinion is currently in progress. Additionally, there is an ongoing consultation for the Southeast Shrimp Fisheries (including both Gulf and South Atlantic regions) to examine the effects of skimmer trawls without Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs). The draft biological opinion is under internal review and is expected to be finalized in late 2013 or early 2014. These briefings were provided in accordance with a request from the South Atlantic Council in June 2013 for SERO Protected Resources Division to provide the Committee with an update on any ongoing formal consultation and record input from Committee members for consideration during the consultation.

**ESA Working Group Update**

Council staff provided a brief presentation on the ESA Working Group, a joint working group to make recommendations on increasing transparency and improving confidence in ESA consultations on fishery management plans. The Working Group was scheduled to have finalized recommendations in October 2013 but the meeting was delayed because of the federal government shut-down. The recommendations will be reviewed by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) in December 2013 and by the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) in February 2014, and should be available for the SAFMC meeting in March 2014.

**Status Review for American Eel**

Wilson Laney, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and FWS Southeast Region representative on the Status Review Core Team, provided an update on the Status Review for American Eel. Currently the Core Team has not determined if a Status Review Team will be assembled or there will be workshops for interested parties and/or stakeholders to provide information. Additional information will be provided as the Status Review continues. The Council was sent a letter notifying it of the Status Review and soliciting any information on American eels it wishes to provide, especially information generated after the last Status Review which was completed in 2007.