



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, Florida 33149 U.S.A.
(305) 361-4204 Fax: (305) 361-4499

24 March, 2017

TO: Gregg Waugh,
SAFMC Executive Director

FROM: Bonnie J. Ponwith, Ph.D.
Science and Research Director

SUBJECT: SAFMC Assessment and Related Requests

You noted the decision to postpone the MRIP revision assessments until after the third year of comparison data are available in your memo dated 22 March. This decision does, indeed, create an opportunity to consider other activities that are commensurate with that level of effort. Unfortunately, a Standard Assessment for Golden Tilefish is not a good fit for that window. That assessment would require a dedicated analyst for between six to nine months. After consulting with our age readers, we have also determined it would not be possible to have the otoliths ready in time to fit this window. Based on discussions at the last SAFMC meeting, I believe conducting a workshop that includes MRIP, SEFSC, SAFMC and GMFMC SSC representatives to begin the work on setting minimum standards for and improving the precision of MRIP catch estimates for management purposes would be a good fit in terms of priority and relative effort.

You requested that our analysts complete an evaluation to determine if the same challenges we encountered reading blueline tilefish carry over into our work on golden tilefish, and to have that analysis by April 21 for discussion at the SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting. We will be able to meet this request.

You also requested an analysis regarding our aging capacity in the South Atlantic, including the SEFSC and MARMAP partners, in time for the June 2017 briefing book deadline, including:

- Resources required to clear the current backlog of age evaluations
- Resources required to provide up-to-date structure evaluations for primary data collection species, and
- A comparison of the current capacity/resources relative to what it would take to stay up to date for those species.

We will be able to meet this request.

If you have questions or concerns, please to not hesitate to contact me.

cc: Monica Smit-Brunello
John McGovern, Rick DeVactor
Theo Brainerd, Trika Gerard, Peter Thompson,
Larry Massey, Erik Williams