



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

21 April, 2017

TO: Gregg Waugh, Executive Director, SAFMC
Michelle Duval, Ph.D., Chair, SAFMC

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

SUBJECT: Red Snapper Guidance Request

The SEFSC concurs with the SEDAR Review Panel and SAFMC SSC's approval of SEDAR 41, the red snapper stock assessment. The SSC developed ABC recommendations based on the projection analysis that allowed the stock to reach a rebuilt status in the time allowed by the rebuilding plan (by 2044). The use of an ABC based primarily on fishery discards for monitoring the effectiveness of management action is likely ineffective due to the high level of uncertainty in measures of discards and the change in the effort estimation methodology that will be implemented in the MRIP survey.

Monitoring progress toward rebuilding will require a departure from the traditional techniques. SEFSC analysts are exploring an Index Projection Methodology as an alternative approach for monitoring stock response to management measures. They plan to discuss this with the SSC at their upcoming meeting to get input on the method. They will also discuss how these results may be used by the SSC to generate future catch level advice, given updated projections have not been provided. Information for the SSC regarding this is attached.

At the last SAFMC meeting we discussed holding a workshop to discuss ways to characterize the uncertainty of MRIP estimates (landings, discards) to provide guidance on: 1) at what point the uncertainty is sufficiently high to warrant alternative methods for accounting for catch; 2) what those alternative methods might be; 3) means to improve the precision of MRIP catch estimates; and 3) means to augment MRIP sampling to improve data quality. The SAFMC recognized this is a region-wide issue so a presentation was made to the GMFMC to request involvement of their SSC, and the GMFMC has agreed to participate. It has also been suggested that representation from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council may be advisable. We'll begin to stand up a steering committee to refine the workshop objectives, define the deliverables and begin work on the agenda. One deliverable from the workshop could evaluate the precision of red snapper discard estimates to help advise on their use for monitoring stock status when discards are the predominant contributor to fishing mortality. The target timeline for the workshop is this fall, however, we'll have more clarity on the timeline for delivery of advice to the SSC once the steering committee is stood up and begins their work on workshop planning.

Attachment

cc: Roy Crabtree, Jack McGovern, and Rick DeVictor
Monica Smit-Brunello
John Carmichael, Kari MacLauchlin, and Chip Collier
Theo Brainerd and Trika Gerard

SSC Input for April 2017 Meeting

The SAFMC SSC reviewed and approved the SEDAR 41 Red Snapper stock assessment in May 2016. The SSC developed ABC recommendations based on the projection analysis that allowed the stock to reach a rebuilt status in the time allowed by the rebuilding plan (by 2044). In our memo of February 15, 2017, the SEFSC indicated reasons why any further proposed projections would not be appropriate for management. These reasons revolve around the uncertainty and methodology changes for future estimates of discards from the MRIP survey. Non-traditional methods and data sources may need to be used to monitor management action effectiveness and progress toward rebuilding.

The SEFSC proposes creating and an Index Projection Methodology that uses trends in the fishery-independent survey to monitor rebuilding progress and serve as the basis for the SSC's future ABC advice to the Council.

The SEFSC would like to get feedback from the SSC on this proposed approach. Specifically:

1. The SEFSC is actively working on research into using SERFS video data to monitor future effectiveness of management actions, i.e. progress toward rebuilding. We ask the SSC to provide input on this proposed approach and its potential utility for determining management action effectiveness.
2. Discuss options for the appropriate baseline against which to compare the Index Projection.
3. Discuss how the index may be used by the SSC to develop ABC advice.

Dr. Erik Williams will be preparing a brief summary of the proposed approach and will be on hand to answer any questions the SSC may have at their next meeting.

We appreciate the SSC taking time to provide input on new methodology that has the potential to benefit management.