OVERVIEW
SEDAR Committee Meeting
Portions Closed Session
December 6, 2016

The SEDAR Committee will make appointments during closed session, then receive updates on SEDAR projects and consider assessment priorities.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: September 2016

1) SEDAR APPOINTMENTS, CLOSED SESSION (Attachment 1, Closed Session Document)

The Committee is asked to make workshop appointments for SEDAR 50, Blueline Tilefish; SEDAR 48, Black Grouper; SEDAR 56, Black Sea Bass; and the SEDAR Stock ID and Meristics Workshop. This item will be addressed during a closed session.

2) SEDAR PROJECT UPDATES and APPROVALS

SEDAR 48, Black Grouper: A benchmark assessment of Black Grouper will be prepared during 2017 with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission providing the analytical team. This is a jointly managed stock with the GMFMC so both Councils will be making appointments and approving the schedule and Terms of Reference (**Attachment 2**).

>   **ACTION: Approve Schedule and TORS**

SEDAR 56, Black Sea Bass: Standard assessment is underway. A standard assessment was requested to allow consideration of new video data. Data through 2015 will be included, with the assessment developed through webinars in mid-2017. The assessment will be submitted to the SSC for review in October 2017 and recommendations provided to the Council in December 2017. Note that the timing of this assessment does not allow including revised MRIP data, so it will need to be revised when revised MRIP estimates become available in October 2017. It is not known at this time whether that can be accommodated within the planned timeline of SSC review. The SEDAR Committee is asked to approve the schedule and TORs (**Attachment 2**)

>   **ACTION: Approve Schedule and TORS**

SEDAR 50, Blueline Tilefish: Benchmark assessment underway. Significant events to date include a recommendation from the June 2016 Age Workshop that age determinations are not reliable and should not be used in the assessment; and a recommendation from the July 2016 Stock ID workshop that the biological stock extends from the Mid-Atlantic through the Gulf of Mexico. Following discussion of the stock ID recommendation, the SEDAR Steering Committee recommended a joint SSC review of the stock ID findings. This was held October 28, 2016. The Steering Committee recommended a management level review of the joint SSC findings to provide TOR guidance. This will be held November 14, 2016 via conference call. The SEDAR Committee will be updated on the outcomes of this call at this meeting.

SEDAR 51, Gulf of Mexico Gray Snapper: Benchmark assessment underway. Stock ID for Gray Snapper will be considered during a series of webinars during November and December 2016. SAFMC SSC representation was requested on these webinars because the stock could extend through the Florida Keys and into the South Atlantic jurisdiction. If that is the case, the Council will be asked to consider to what extent it will become involved in the other phases of this assessment.

Based on the recommendations of the first stock ID webinar held November 15, 2016, the assessment will not extend beyond Monroe County. Therefore, the SAFMC does not need to become a co-Cooperator for this project. Draft stock ID workgroup recommendations:

General Recommendations of the SEDAR 51 Stock ID workgroup
Recommend that Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic should not be combined into one assessment.
• Genetics study indicates difference between Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic
• Tagging data indicates limited movement of adult fish
Recommend that all Monroe County data be included in the Gulf
• Genetics study indicates difference between Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic
• Issues with separating/classifying life history samples in Keys to Gulf or SA
• MRIP places all Monroe County in Gulf for reporting, even though the landings can be separated out from info from State of Florida

ACTION: Provide Guidance

SEDAR 53, South Atlantic Red Grouper: Standard assessment is underway. A standard assessment was requested to allow consideration of new video index data. The Data Scoping call was held August 8, 2016, datasets are due to the analysts by September 5, 2016, and assessment webinars will be held November 2016 – January 2017. This assessment will be reviewed by the SSC in April 2017 and available for Council consideration in June 2017.

ACTION: Provide Guidance

SEDAR 57, South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper: Standard assessment is planned. A standard assessment was requested to allow consideration of new video index data. The terminal year will be 2016 and assessment webinars will be held in late 2017. The SSC will be asked to review TORS prior to the March 2017 Council meeting where they will be offered to the SEDAR Committee for approval. This assessment will be reviewed by the SSC in April 2018 and available for Council consideration in June 2018.

ACTION: Provide Guidance

MRIP Revision Assessments: Requested stocks for revision assessments are Red Snapper, Red Grouper, Blueline Tilefish, and Black Sea Bass. Revision assessments will include an update of the MRIP data, based on calibrations applied to address the effort survey change. No additional changes or data will be considered, and the terminal year of the assessment will not be advanced. Based on the latest MRIP progress reports (**Attachment 3**), the transition process is on track and adjusted data should be available for use in assessments by October 2017. This will allow all assessments planned for 2018 and beyond, and the Vermilion Snapper assessment planned for late 2017, to include the adjusted MRIP catch estimates.

ACTION: Provide Guidance

MRIP Effort Survey Transition Update: Initial comparisons of the new and existing effort survey approaches indicate an improved response rate from the new mail-based survey. This is important, as the response rate to the existing phone survey has declined steadily since at least 2003 and has been below 10% the last several years. Estimates of effort measured in angler trips are overall 4.7 times higher for the new survey method. This translates into higher catches. There are differences between modes and states that will likely complicate calibration efforts. Side by side survey efforts are being conducted in 2016 and 2017, and then in 2018 the phone survey will be discontinued.

ACTION: Provide Guidance

Stock ID and Meristics Workshop: The Data Best Practices workshop in 2015 recommended a workshop devoted to addressing Stock ID and meristics issues for upcoming assessments. Work is underway to hold a workshop in Summer 2017 to address Cobia, Scamp, Yellowmouth Grouper (due to species ID concerns with Scamp), Gag, Gray Triggerfish, and White Grunt. Recognizing the importance of stock ID recommendations and their impact on both assessment preparation and management, the SEDAR Steering Committee recommended that convening an independent peer review of the Stock ID workshop recommendations.

ACTION: Provide Guidance

3) SEDAR STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT (Attachment 4)

The SEDAR Steering Committee met September 20-21, 2016, in Charleston, SC. Topics included the research track proposal, reports on ongoing projects, discussion of the recent Goliath Grouper assessment and consideration of assessment priorities for 2018-2020. Highlights of the meeting are provided below.

Research Track: The goal of the research track step is to develop and peer review a robust assessment tool, and then to apply that tool to the most recent data through an operational assessment that will prepared following review and acceptance of the tool developed through the research track. The SEDAR Steering Committee recommended implementing the research track process as soon as possible, based on suggestions that the change in process will increase assessment productivity. An initial pilot of the approach was planned for the Scamp assessment, and now it will be applied to the 2018 Cobia assessment and all future assessments. Initial guidelines for the process will be reviewed by the SEDAR Steering Committee in Fall 2018, and finalized in 2019 once the Scamp application is evaluated. It is important to note the research track assessments will not typically include all of the most recent information (e.g., the most recent year of data) and will not provide stock status or be used to support SSC fishing level recommendations. Such actions will be considered once the operational assessment is completed and the most recent information is included in the assessment tool developed by the research track. In the case of the Scamp example, the research track will conclude in early 2019 and be reviewed by the SSC at its Fall 2019 meeting. The operational assessment phase will be

completed in mid- to late-2020, once 2019 data are available, and be provided to the SSC for its Fall 2020 meeting.

Schedule: The SEDAR Steering Committee considered assessment schedules and approved projects through 2018, and into 2020 in some cases. See Table B in the SEDAR Steering Committee Report for an overview of upcoming projects.

The next meeting of the SEDAR Steering Committee will be in Spring 2017, via webinar.

ACTION: Provide guidance for the next Steering Committee meeting

4) Assessment Priorities (Attachment 5 & SSC Report)

The SSC, in conjunction with AP representatives (Kenny Fex, Snapper Grouper; Robert Johnson, Dolphin-Wahoo, and Ira Laks, Mackerel-Cobia), developed scores required to apply the NMFS assessment prioritization tool during the October 2016 meeting. SSC Chair Dr. Marcel Reichert will report on the SSC recommendations, summarized in the table below. The prioritization tool and scores applied by the SSC is provided in spreadsheet form with **Attachment 5**. Note that the list of candidate stocks scored does not include all managed stocks. Stocks were selected for this evaluation based on those that have either been assessed or prioritized for assessment, and those for which data are believed available to support a quantitative, non-data limited assessment. Eight of the 35 considered have been, or are scheduled to be, assessed. Several of the unassessed stocks have low landings and, in the case of Warsaw Grouper and Speckled Hind, very restrictive management in the South Atlantic.

The Committee is also asked to consider long-term assessment planning. The biggest challenge to long-term assessment planning is balancing need versus capability. Summary statistics below, through June 2016, provide some insight into the problem. Assessments that were not accepted by peer review are included.

- SAFMC Assessments (all types) under SEDAR: 30, addressing 15 stocks
- SAFMC/GMFMC Assessments (all types, e.g., CMP species) under SEDAR: 15, addressing 8 stocks.
- Total SAFMC + SAFMC/GMFMC stocks assessed: 23
- Average annual assessment output, all types, under SEDAR, SAFMC stocks: 2
- Average assessment output, all types, under SEDAR, SAFMC/GMFMC stocks: 3
- Number of assessments currently expected by SAFMC annually and used in planning: 4
- Number of assessments delivered in 2016: 2 (Red Snapper, Tilefish). Note that assessments of Goliath Grouper and Gray Triggerfish were prepared but not accepted by independent peer review panels.
- Expected assessments delivered in 2017: 4. Blueline Tilefish, Red Grouper, Black Sea Bass, Black Grouper
- Expected annual assessment output once the Research Track process is fully implemented: 5

The Council previously identified 18 stocks as priorities for data collection to support quantitative, age-based assessments, and another 10 as secondary stocks for which less intensive assessment efforts are desired. Eight more were characterized as having special date needs, due to life history, fishery, or management circumstances. Given current output of 3 stocks per year, the average age of assessments will be 6 years for the 18 primary stocks. Assessment age refers

to the number of years between the present date and the terminal year of data used in the assessment. Assessment age could drop to 3.6 years if the expected research track output is achieved and the universe of stock remains at 18. If additional stocks are added, such as Cobia which is an emerging priority, or some of the data limited species, the average assessment age of stock assessments will increase.

While it may seem that relatively few stocks are assessed when assessment output is compared to the total stocks managed by the SAFMC, the outlook is improved noticeably when the contribution of the assessed stocks to the overall fishery is considered. In the mixed species snapper-grouper fishery, the assessed stocks represent 68% of overall fishery yield in 2016 (with some adjustments to bump the reference yield to OY for stocks in rebuilding plans with temporarily reduced ACLs.)(Table 3). While all stocks in the CMP FMP have been assessed, none under the Dolphin-Wahoo have been. Each of these major finfish FMPs (Snapper-Grouper, CMP, Dolphin-Wahoo) account for about a third of the overall finfish fishery managed by the SAFMC.

SAFMC Data Collection and Assessment Priority Rankings

Primary Data Collection Species	Secondary Data Collection Species
Vermilion Snapper	Tomtate
Snowy Grouper	Knobbed Porgy
Tilefish	Bar Jack
Red Grouper	Almaco Jack
Black Grouper	Lane Snapper
Scamp	Banded Rudderfish
Black Sea Bass	Rock Hind
Gag Grouper	Red Hind
Greater Amberjack	Wahoo
White Grunt	Penaeid Shrimp
Yellowtail Snapper	
Gray Triggerfish	Stocks with special data needs
Mutton Snapper	Warsaw Grouper
Red Porgy	Speckled Hind
Dolphin	Goliath Grouper
King Mackerel	Nassau Grouper
Spanish Mackerel	Red Snapper
Blueline Tilefish	Wreckfish
	Spiny Lobster
	Golden Crab

ACTION: Provide guidance on long-term assessment priorities
    Discussion considerations:
- Should the priority stocks list be changed?
- Does the Council prefer to devote SEDAR capabilities to keeping existing assessments up-to-date, or to assessing all managed stocks?
- What factors should determine target assessment frequency?

- What stocks should be regularly assessed with intensive, quantitative, age-based methods?
- Which unassessed stocks should be made a priority for research and data collection to support future assessments?

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURN

Table 1. SAFMC Assessment Projects Summary.

Plan Year	SEDAR #	Stocks	Approach	Terminal Data	Assessment Complete	Lead Agency
2016	47	Goliath Grouper	Benchmark	2014	Jun 2016	FL FWCC
	48	Black Grouper	Standard	2014	Dec 2017	FL FWCC
	S	Red grouper	Standard	2015	Jan 2017	SEFSC
2017	50	Blueline Tilefish	Benchmark	2015	June 2017	SEFSC
	S	Vermilion Snapper	Standard	2016	April 2018	SEFSC
	S	Black Sea Bass	Standard	2016	Oct, 2017	SEFSC
	R	MRIP Revisions[1]	Revision	2016	June 2018	SEFSC
2018	B	Yellowtail Snapper	Benchmark	2016	Spring 2019	FL FWCC
	RT	Scamp, Gulf + SA	Research Track	2016	Mid-2019	SEFSC
	RT	Atlantic Cobia	Research Track	2016	Mid-2019	SEFSC
	S	Greater Amberjack	Standard	2017	Jan 2019	SEFSC
	S	Red Porgy	Standard	2017	Jan 2019	SEFSC
	B	Hogfish	Benchmark	2016	Spring 2019	FL FWCC
	B	King Mackerel	Benchmark	2016	Mid 2019	SEFSC
2019	S	Snowy Grouper	Standard	2017	Late 2019	SEFSC
	S	Spanish Mackerel	Standard	2017	Late 2019	SEFSC
	S	Gag	Standard	2018	Early 2020	SEFSC
2020	O	Scamp, Gulf + SA	Operational	2018	Late 2020	SEFSC
	O	Atlantic Cobia	Operational	2019	Late 2020	SEFSC

1. Red Snapper, Red Grouper, Blueline Tilefish, Black Sea Bass

Table 2. Results of the SAFMC SSC application of the NMFS stock assessment prioritization tool to selected SAFMC stocks. Rank is the priority ranking of stocks by score. Stock is the species or stock to which the scoring was applied. Score is the outcome of the prioritization tool. Assessed indicates the last, or next, stock assessment. Priority rating refers to previous priorities developed by the Council through its research plans.

Rank	Stock	Score	Assessed	Priority Rating
1	Red Snapper	5.7	2016	Special
2	Lane Snapper	4.7	No	Secondary
3	FLK/EFL Hogfish	4.7	2014	
4	Red Porgy	4.7	2018	Primary
5	Dolphin	4.5	No	Primary
6	White Grunt	4.4	2021	Primary
7	Snowy Grouper	4.2	2019	Primary
8	Almaco Jack	4.1	No	Secondary
9	Scamp	3.7	2018	Primary
10	Red Grouper	3.7	2017	Primary
11	Knobbed Porgy	3.5	No	Secondary
12	Blueline Tilefish	3.4	2017	Primary
13	GA-NC Hogfish	3.4	2014	
14	Red Hind	3.3	No	Secondary
15	Silk Snapper	3.3	No	
16	Gray Triggerfish	3.1	2016 (fail)	Primary
17	Warsaw Grouper	3.1	No	Special
18	King Mackerel	2.9	2018	Primary
19	Spanish Mackerel	2.9	2019	Primary
20	Black Sea Bass	2.7	2017	Primary
21	Gag	2.5	2019	Primary
22	Cobia	2.5	2018	
23	Tilefish	2.5	2016	Primary
24	Vermilion Snapper	2.4	2017	Primary
25	Greater Amberjack	2.4	2018	Primary
26	Black Grouper	2.2	2017	Primary
27	Mutton Snapper	2.1	2015	Primary
28	Yellowtail Snapper	2.1	2018	Primary
29	Speckled Hind	2.0	No	Special
30	Goliath Grouper	2.0	2016 (Fail)	Special
31	Wreckfish	1.4	2014	Special

Table 3. Snapper-Grouper stocks, 2016 ACLs or equilibrium OY for stocks in rebuilding plans, and the contribution of each stock to the total ACL.

STOCK	TOTAL ACL	cumulative
Assessed Stocks		
Yellowtail snapper	3,037,500	0.15
Greater Amberjack	1,937,225	0.24
Black Sea Bass	1,756,452	0.33
Vermilion Snapper	1,681,480	0.41
Mutton snapper	926,600	0.45
Red porgy (OY)	810,000	0.49
Red grouper	780,000	0.53
Gag grouper	610,233	0.56
Tilefish	560,490	0.59
Wreckfish	423,700	0.61
Snowy Grouper (OY)	407,300	0.63
Red Snapper (OY)	398,000	0.65
Black Grouper	262,594	0.66
Blueline Tilefish	174,798	0.67
Hogfish	134,824	0.68
Goliath	0	0.68
Scheduled for Assessment		
Gray Triggerfish	716,999	0.71
White Grunt	643,889	0.74
Scamp	335,744	0.76
Others		
Gray snapper	1,247,132	0.82
Atlantic Spadefish	812,478	0.86
Almaco jack	302,517	0.87
Bar Jack	62,249	0.88
Speckled Hind	0	0.88
Warsaw	0	0.88
grunts	836,025	0.92
snappers	796,884	0.96
Jacks	457,241	0.98
Deepwater	169,896	0.99
porgy	143,262	0.99
shallow groupers	104,190	1.00
TOTAL Snapper-Grouper	20,529,702	
Assessed Snapper-Grouper	13,901,196	
Total ACL for other FMPs		
Coastal-Migratory Pelagics	17,187,000	
Dolphin Wahoo	17,139,806	