

SAFMC SEDAR Projects for 2027

February 2024

The SEDAR Project Schedule helps to organize ongoing and future assessment requests for the Council to consider when requesting stock assessments from the SEFSC and FWC. Staff have been filling in the future requests so that Council members get an idea when projects could be put back on the schedule or have the schedule rearranged to accommodate changes. Due to potential changes in the meeting timing for SEDAR Steering Committee in 2024, the SEDAR Committee is asked to review the assessment requests for 2027 at this meeting (**Figure 1**). There are three slots open for assessments because the Red Grouper Benchmark Assessment will be carried over from 2026. Proposed projects include an Operational Assessment for Red Snapper, Greater Amberjack assessment as a research track or benchmark assessment, and a Red Porgy Operational Assessment. If Red Snapper is changed to a benchmark assessment, then add Black Sea Bass in the slot for 2027. A full list of previously assessed species is provided in **Table 1**.

Staff Rationale for 2027 Species

Greater Amberjack could either be a research track assessment or benchmark assessment. Staff recommend having this as a benchmark assessment so that the results can be applied directly to management. This project will incorporate findings from the Greater Amberjack Research Project and update information in the previous assessment (terminal year 2017). The results of SEDAR 59 indicated that the stock was not overfished nor experiencing overfishing.

Although Red Porgy have been in a rebuilding plan most years since 2000, the stock has remained overfished with minimal signs of recovery. This assessment will be an operational assessment for Red Porgy based on SEDAR 60 and previous assessments (terminal year 2017). The assessment was originally scheduled in 2025, but it was moved back to 2027 to accommodate a benchmark assessment for Red Grouper (terminal year 2015). A recent paper (Bacheler et al. 2023) indicated Red Porgy recruitment failure in recent years as a potential factor in the low abundance.

Red Snapper Operational Assessment will be the follow up operational assessment after the completion of SEDAR 90 Research Track Assessment. This operational assessment will include information from the South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Project. The results of SEDAR 73 (terminal year 2019) indicated the stock was overfished and experiencing overfishing.

If Red Snapper is changed to a Benchmark Assessment, then an operational assessment for Black Sea Bass would be recommended in 2027. The terminal year for the assessment was 2021. Due to the overfished status based on the most recent assessment (SEDAR 76), a rebuilding plan will be needed for this species. The projections for rebuilding are dependent on the predictions for recruitment; however, there were declining trends in recruitment. An updated assessment would be useful to describe recent recruitment and if management would be on target for rebuilding. The SSC requested an interim analysis for this species.

Other Stocks Considered

Vermilion Snapper – The results of the Vermilion Snapper interim assessment were presented to the SSC in October 2023. The SSC expressed concern using an interim assessment for this stock based on the limited fit of the assessment to the observed points in the trap/video index of abundance. The SSC did not recommend any changes to the ABC for Vermilion Snapper. An operational assessment is needed for Vermilion Snapper. SEDAR 55 was the last assessment for Vermilion Snapper with a terminal year of 2015.

Spanish Mackerel – The results of the last stock assessment for Spanish Mackerel (SEDAR 78 – terminal year 2020) are being incorporated into Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 13. The SSC expressed concern with the stock assessment and requested additional runs of the assessment. Due to the number of issues to be addressed, the next assessment should be a benchmark assessment.

SEDAR Committee Recommendation				STC Approved and Scheduled	STC Approved not scheduled	To be finalized	Future Request
	1	2	3	4	CMP	FWC	
2023		S82 Gray Triggerfish RT					
				S89 Tilefish OA		S79 Mutton Snapper Benchmark	
2024			S92 Blueline Tilefish OA				Yellowtail Snapper
	S90 Red Snapper RT			Dolphin MSE Review Only			S94 Hogfish Benchmark
2025			Atl Migratory Cobia				
2026		SEDAR 82 Gray Triggerfish OA	Snowy Grouper OA	Red Grouper Benchmark	SA King Mackerel OA	Black Grouper Benchmark/ MSE	
2027			Gag OA				
	S90 Red Snapper OA		Red Pogy OA				
2028	Vermilion Snapper OA	Greater Amberjack Benchmark	Spanish Mackerel Benchmark	Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper OA			
2029							

Figure 1. SEDAR Project Schedule based on the outcome of the October 2023 SEDAR Steering Committee meeting and recommendations from the SAFMC SEDAR Committee in December 2023. Ongoing and scheduled projects (green bolded and underlined text), projects approved by the SEDAR Steering Committee but not scheduled (orange and bolded text), future requests (blue). The red circle indicates a potential project slot if Red Snapper is changed to a benchmark assessment. Timing is approximate.

Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper – SEDAR 68 was recently completed and the amendment to develop the rebuilding plan should be established in late 2025. An operational assessment in 2028 would occur two full years with new management actions in place.

Wreckfish – the industry previously funded a stock assessment for Wreckfish with data through 2010. Confidentiality of landings has been an issue in the past as well as the life history (evidence of Wreckfish mixing from eastern Atlantic Ocean to western Atlantic Ocean (Presa et al. 2023)). A management strategy evaluation may be the best approach to address this stock.

Table 1. Stocks that have been assessed through the SEDAR Process with last assessment, assessment stock status, and next assessment type and year. Highlighted in yellow are species recommended by Council staff for 2027 and species considered are highlighted in gray.

Stock	Last Assessment	Terminal Year in Last Assessment	Last Assessment Status		Next Assessment Type	Next Assessment (Start Year)
			Overfished	Overfishing		
Black Grouper	SEDAR 19 (2010)	2008			FWC Benchmark/MSE	2026
Black Sea Bass	SEDAR 76 (2023)	2021	Y	?	Operational	2027?
Blueline Tilefish	SEDAR 50 (2017)	2015			Operational	2024
Dolphin					MSE	2025
FLK/EFL Hogfish	SEDAR 37 (2014)	2012	Y	Y	SEDAR 94 (B)	2024/2025
GA-NC Hogfish	SEDAR 37 (2014)	2012	U	U	Data Limited Approach	
Gag	SEDAR 71 (2021)	2019	Y	Y	Operational	2025
golden Tilefish	SEDAR 66 (2021)	2018			Operational	2024
Goliath Grouper	SEDAR 47 (2016)	2014	U	U		
Gray Triggerfish					SEDAR 82 (RT)	2022/2023
Greater Amberjack	SEDAR 59 (2020)	2016			Research Track	2027
King Mackerel	SEDAR 38 Update (2020)	2017/2018			Operational	2025
Mutton Snapper	SEDAR 79 (ongoing)					
Red Grouper	SEDAR 53 (2017)	2015	Y	Y	Benchmark	2026
Red Porgy	SEDAR 60 (2020)	2017	Y	Y	Operational	2027
Red Snapper	SEDAR 73 (2021)	2019	Y	Y	Research Track/Operational?	2024/2027?
Scamp	SEDAR 68 (2022)	2021	Y		Operational	2022

Snowy Grouper	SEDAR 36 Update (2020)	2018	Y	Y	Operational	2026
Spanish Mackerel	SEDAR 78 (2022)	2020			Benchmark	2028
Spiny Lobster	SEDAR 8B Update (2010)	2009/2010				
Vermilion Snapper	Interim Analysis (2023)	2022	NA	NA	Operational	2028
Wreckfish	Industry Funded Assessment	2010				
Yellowtail Snapper	SEDAR 64 (2020)	2017			Operational/Interim	2024