

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SEDAR COMMITTEE

**Holiday Inn Brownstone Hotel
Raleigh, NC**

December 6, 2011

SUMMARY MINUTES

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Other Participants Attached

The SEDAR Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Roosevelt Ballroom of the Holiday Inn Brownstone Hotel, December 6, 2011, and was called to order at 4:15 o'clock p.m. by Chairman David Cupka.

MR. CUPKA: I'd like to convene the SEDAR Committee. The first order of business is approval of the agenda. Are there any changes to the agenda? Seeing none, our agenda is approved. The next order of business is the approval of the minutes. Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes? Seeing none, then our minutes are approved. That brings us down to SEDAR activities and that's behind Attachment 1, and, John, you're going to give us an overview on SEDAR activities.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We recently completed SEDAR 25, which were the South Atlantic Sea Bass and Golden Tilefish. It went to the SSC at their last meeting in November, and you'll get findings from those assessments when we talk about those stocks at the Snapper Grouper Committee.

The major project that is underway now will get started in February with the data workshop that's for cobia and Spanish mackerel. This will be big because it's both stocks in the Gulf and South Atlantic as well, so there are essentially four assessments that will be coming out of that. There is revised project schedule that shows what was agreed to by the steering committee and a full listing of everything that's underway in 2012.

We're going to also have a couple of updates coming for the South Atlantic in 2012, but the timing of those is not exactly certain. We have work with the Science Center to see about when we get those, but our intention is they would come some time later in the year so that we can get all of the data through 2011 to be included in those. If there are any questions about any ongoing projects, I'd be glad to hear them.

MR. CUPKA: Any questions for John on ongoing or planned projects? Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: I guess we'll get into this tomorrow, John, but it seems to me we're going to have to talk about working a black sea bass update into the schedule. It's my understanding that we've got ABCs for two years but not beyond that. We don't have an update scheduled at this stage for sea bass as far as I can tell; do we?

MR. CARMICHAEL: We discussed possibly doing an update in 2015 or perhaps 2014, but I think, yes, we'll have to talk about that. I was figuring when we get to number six when we talk about steering committee guidance we should bring up what the SSC did about black sea bass and how we need to work that into the mix.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, other comments or questions? Seeing none, then we will go our next agenda item, John. That's the Report of the Steering Committee Meeting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The steering committee met in October here in Charleston. Their primary duties at that time were to deal with the assessment schedule to finalize the plans for

2013 and come up with proposed projects for 2014. You have their report and the table at the back which lists the projects that they're intending to work on.

We finalized 2013 and proposed for 2014. There is a description in there with the process the committee intends to use now to make sure that there is adequate time for input from the Science Center and from the SSCs and from the council in the scheduling. The basic process is it's laid out is that the steering committee has the list for 2014 in that table of what is tentative.

That will be asked for review by the council – we're doing that now – by the SSC and we will ask the SSC to do that in April, and then it will go through a technical committee the SEDAR committee has derived which includes representatives from the Science Center, from the primary data collection groups and from the SSCs.

It gives all those people a chance to look at potential overlaps and potential issues where resources might get stretched too thin and to make sure all the people at aging labs and other places are aware of what the project is. They discuss any issues or make any recommendations and that will get to the steering committee in May.

There is more chance for them then to finalize that and discuss it and resolve some of the issues with the intent that then we come around to October of 2012 we will be finalizing the schedule for 2014 and starting the cycle all over again. We're trying to get it out to about 18 months and people have a solid feeling of what it is we're going to do without any changes and that they do have really a year essentially for the councils, the Science Center and the SSCs to work through any issues and make sure they're happy with what is being proposed.

There were a few other things discussed, just finalizing some things that are underway, continually trying to deal with issues like our summary report to make sure the information that is coming out is useful and it's the right type of content and given in the right type of context and just some talk about other things that are working.

For the most part this meeting was primarily devoted to those schedule activities, which I think we should talk about those some in detail and if you guys have any guidance we can probably bring that up under Item 6. The other thing we talked about, which this leads into the next action item or the next discussion item, is red snapper.

At our last meeting this committee discussed having the Science Center give reports on red snapper at this meeting in December and then at a meeting in March. Now, you'll notice on our schedule for red snapper from the steering committee there is a little different approach put forth. We had talked about trying to do a red snapper assessment in 2013.

One of the issues with that is we wouldn't have very many years with that new independent monitoring program under our belt. The first year was not a full year, and it looks like you're going to need three to five years to start really using something like that as a primary source of assessment information; so rather than devote a full slot within SEDAR to that, what was discussed at the steering committee was that the Science Center will do an evaluation of the red snapper population.

They'll look at the progress under that independent monitoring program. They'll look at what that is show about the population and look into how the regulations are working. We made predictions about the amount of reduction that would be obtained from the moratorium and what type encounter rates there would be under those regulations, so this would give them an opportunity to evaluate all that and bring a report to the council.

The process for this is that they would do an analysis and review it through the SSC. To make sure the SSC has information that they will accept and they can allow us to make some recommendations, the Science Center is expected to come to the SSC in April with a proposal for they would evaluate and how they would deal with the situation and what analyses they would put forth for red snapper.

Then in April of 2013 they would come with the final report and the SSC would provide the peer review of that. We're not sure exactly what that will consist of and that's why we're bringing in the SSC because the Science Center needs an opportunity to look at that independent survey, look at other data sources and think about what types of analyses they can do.

The steering committee thought this was a good way to avoid devoting a full regular SEDAR benchmark slot to something where the information from the scientists that had come forth sounded like there wasn't a very good opportunity that you could do a full alternative assessment on red snapper at this time.

That leads in I guess to Theo. If there are any questions on that; but if not we can hear where the Science Center stands on this monitoring and assessment. I guess one thing I was going to add is that with this new proposal we may not need that the Science Center comes back in March and reports to you guys. We may wait and see what they have for the SSC in April.

MR. CUPKA: Thank you, John. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: The only comment I make, John, is that given the quality of the population dynamists on our SSC, I watched them go through that Wreckfish DCAC and that was pretty impressive. Given the short notice and the timing and they stayed up most of the night to do it, which was very impressive, I just hope that it's given to them at a time and planning when they don't have to stay up all night to do something like that. I was very impressed with their willingness and how they approached that problem and it came out pretty interesting.

MR. CUPKA: Other questions or comments? Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: I think this is important and we really need to stay on top of this and follow through with it because we've got to develop a process for how we reopen this fishery. We can't reopen it until the SSC gives us an ABC that is enough fish to reopen the fishery. The concern was if we're unable to do a stock assessment that comes to a conclusion, we don't want to be stumped, so we're trying to lay out some alternative pathways to get us to a point where we can reopen this fishery.

I think we really need to stay on top of this and make sure everybody is following up and we get there. I don't want to get to 2013 – you know, I can live with getting there and saying we can't reopen the fishery, but I don't want to get there and say, well, we just don't know because we can't reach a conclusion. I think we've got to do much better than that and have something solid on hand to explain either we're going to reopen the fishery or if we can't reopen the fishery here is why.

MR. CUPKA: Good point, Roy, and I think we all agree with that. Theo, did you want to bring us something from the Science Center aspect on where we are in terms of the survey and the results?

DR. BRAINERD: First, I'll go through the objectives and the methods for the Southeast Fishery-Independent Survey and basically to provide data to support stock assessments for reef-associated species, cooperative effort with MARMAP and SEAMAP, increase the number and spatial distribution of samples, implement video cameras as a survey gear, map hard bottom habitats to improve survey design and perform applied results to inform methods and address management issues.

The methods being used are Chevron trapping, attached underwater video cameras and multi-mapping to identify habitats. Now this table shows the work accomplished so far and also what is planned for 2012; 2010 and 2011; the number of sea days with contract vessels, with NOAA vessels; the camera/trap deployments; the area mapped; states sampled; and also the samplings that were done.

For 2012 the plan is to have 50 at-sea days with contract vessels and with a NOAA vessel we're planning 15, but there is a question mark there because we're still negotiating with sea days, so that might increase but we're not sure yet. Also, we're planning greater than 500 camera/trap deployments and greater than hundred square kilometers of area mapped.

I would also add North Carolina to the states that would be sampled in 2012. We plan on sampling during the months of April to September so it's a much longer timeframe planned for 2012. Now, the outlook for a red snapper assessment, here I would have to provide some updates. I know John mentioned about the plan, but I think that has changed slightly since late last week because we had some discussions on this, and I will you the reasons why.

We have looked into the video-based index of abundance issue, and we also looked at what was done with the Gulf of Mexico and they have some useful index generated for red snapper from video surveys with lower sample sizes. We feel confident that we will be able to do that in the South Atlantic.

In 2010 red snapper was observed in 34 percent of the videos, so we believe we have enough samples there in 2010. In 2011 we are currently are analyzing the videos, so the issue now is that we feel like we can use video index for the red snapper assessment. We are also going to supplement that with hook-and-gear efforts in 2012 in cooperation with the state of Florida and also with some of our efforts to more fully characterize age distribution.

The outlook again is that by early 2013 we will have three years worth of fishery-independent data from this effort and also the data would be adequate to conduct a successful benchmark assessment in 2013. Last week we decided that we'll be able to do a successful benchmark assessment in 2013.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That's good news and I would take it! Does that mean you guys are doing that in addition to the other five stocks we're planning for the South Atlantic or is the Science Center planning on bumping one of those?

DR. BRAINERD: We would have to negotiate that. We might have to bump one of those off, but we feel like it's very important for red snapper so that's why we decided we will go ahead since we'll have adequate data.

MR. CUPKA: Well, that is good news and it is a little different from what we heard. In our schedule we didn't even have it down as a placeholder, I don't think, for 2013. Obviously, that's an extremely important species and it will be given that high priority when the steering committee meets to plan the assessments for 2013. Okay, any other questions for Theo?

MR. PHILLIPS: Theo, one of the last MARFINs that I went to down in St. Pete one of the research projects were mapping hard bottom so they could say we've got X amount of hard bottom so we might have X amount of productivity of a certain species of fish. Are you going to be able to take something like that as you map this hard bottom tied in with your video monitoring and then use that to come up with some numbers that might help with the abundance and the productivity?

DR. BRAINERD: I can't speak to the specifics of that but I believe those mapping efforts are part of what is going to be incorporated in terms of the video efforts to be able to do the assessment. I would say yes, but I can't speak to the specifics.

MR. BOYLES: Mr. Chairman, I'm not on your committee but I just wanted to remind the committee that the MARMAP Program continues to sample these areas as well. We've got short longline efforts as well and just for the committee to be reminded of that. Thank you.

DR. BRAINERD: Thanks, Robert, for reminding me about that. I did mention that this effort is also in collaboration with MARMAP and SEAMAP, so, yes, we're also appreciative of the effort with the MARMAP Project.

MR. CURRIN: Robert, out of curiosity how many bones are you generating through your sampling efforts?

MR. BOYLES: On red snapper not a lot of them.

MR. CARMICHAEL: David, the next action is guidance for the steering committee; and given the news we just got from the Science Center, which I assure all of you I did not know until you just knew that, that they were planning on changing the schedule that we thought we finalized in October.

That means one of these stocks is probably going to have to go and I think the sooner the council gives some guidance on that the better because I don't think I have to refresh everybody on the situation we created by doing these things last year and making changes in December and January when our aging people were already underway on some other species and it got us in a real bind making those guys shift gears.

Remember our MARMAP people, as Robert said, are involved in this a lot; and sometimes when we put a number of really big MARMAP species and try to do them in one year, we create a problem with them. We need to decide which of these stocks you guys think you can forego in lieu of red snapper and let those guys know ASAP and probably consider requesting that the steering committee get together at its earliest convenience.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, I also think we need to schedule a sea bass assessment in 2013, which probably means two stocks would need to be bumped. If we don't we're going end up having to hold whatever TAC we decide on tomorrow in place until we get a new assessment because we don't have any ABCs out beyond 2013. John, I assuming the SSC is not likely to give us another ABC until we have an updated assessment; is that a fair statement?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I don't think that's fully accurate. They simply said there should be some evaluation of black sea bass; and when we requested clarification, it could include that they simply do projections that include the actual landings. One of their primary concerns about the projections and the accuracy of the longer-term projections was whether or not the management actions were going to keep landings within the ACL and the ABC.

In the case of black sea bass an update would be nice. I certainly don't think we need a full benchmark at this time and some projections that simply accounted for the actual landings as we have in the current assessment for 2011 at which look at the different options may deal with what the SSC needs and give them the information that they need to give us another couple of years of ABCs.

We may not need to fully bump a stock to get black sea bass in there, but we should put something in there to indicate black sea bass needs to be done, which maybe the effort that was going to go into a red snapper evaluation can be redirected toward black sea bass evaluation since we'll be dropping one of these.

DR. CRABTREE: And that sounds good and makes sense, and I'm really encouraged to hear that the Center thinks they'll be able to do a full benchmark in 2013. I guess my concern with red snapper, though, is what if we get to 2013 and we decide at that point we can't pull off an assessment that gets us through?

Then it seems to me there has got to be a Plan B because I don't think it's going to cut it to get to 2013 and say, well, things didn't work out like we thought and we're stuck. I'm not sure what Plan B would be but I'm a little reluctant to pull back on these other – I think we still need to have some discussion with the SSC about everything that's going on and make sure that when we do the analyses for the benchmark, then even if it doesn't work out, we still get enough out of that to go to the SSC and talk about revising the ABC.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that's absolutely right; when we get to this, we should take great care in crafting those terms of reference to make sure that if a full benchmark cannot be done, that there is information that comes out of it that allows us to figure out what to do and we're not left just hanging and waiting for next year.

DR. CRABTREE: Right and we need to make sure as we do that the SSC is fully engaged so there are no surprises and everybody knows what is expected.

MR. CUPKA: And I think we have started modifying the terms of reference so that we don't get to a point where it's all or nothing. We've asked for some additional guidance and whatever they can give us from the information they have so they won't come back and just say we couldn't do the assessment, but here are some information that we can get even though it's not a full assessment; isn't that correct?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, that's exactly right; we're working on that in general for the review especially, yes.

MR. CUPKA: Well, remind me, John, are these in priority order; did we put these in priority order, do you recall?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I believe that they are in priority order. As I recall those were the top priorities, so perhaps it's red grouper that comes out of the mix and then some question as whether or not they can do a benchmark in lieu of a standard and whether or not the Science Center can do three benchmarks within one year, which definitely has consequences.

Remember there is a lot more involved in a benchmark. Our plan procedurally was to do gray triggerfish and blueline tilefish in one SEDAR cycle. Maybe we can do all three. It's something to think about in one SEDAR Project Number.

MR. CUPKA: Well, at the very least we ought to amend this to show red snapper is the first priority, and it's a question of whether to push red grouper off the end or just leave it there as number six in case something does happen that it will still be the queue, so to speak, but we may not get to it. Is that correct?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Does that sound good what David suggested? I like that, David, I think that would be a good way of handling it and make it clear how the council wishes to proceed. I think we could suggest that to the steering committee.

DR. CRABTREE: And then, John, you would try to get some clarity from the SSC in terms of expectations with respect to black sea bass because we need to know that before we give instructions and negotiate all this with the steering committee.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, we would do that.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, other comments or questions in regard to recommendations to the steering committee? Robert.

MR. BOYLES: Mr. Chairman, I told you what South Carolina couldn't do with state-by-state quotas. My intel officer back home tells me that MARMAP can be prepared to provide annual updates for age and reproduction for black sea bass; so to the degree that we can help out there, that may ease a little bit of the squeeze.

MR. CUPKA: Good! Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, John, the Center is doing – it's not really an update of Gulf red snapper this fall, but it is shy of that, but I think it is updating the age comps and some other things. That might be something worth talking to the Center about with respect to sea bass and maybe that would address our needs without having to go to the time involved with a full update.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I was kind of thinking about that. I knew they were considering something along those lines, and I was thinking that might be the way to get a handle for black sea bass; and maybe as they go through that, we'll get a handle of the level of resources that takes and it will help them know how that can fit into this mix come 2013.

MR. CUPKA: All right, that takes us down to SEDAR 28 approval. This was going to be a closed session, but before we go into closed session I want to announce about the public hearings later on tonight. We have a public hearing scheduled to begin at 5:30 on three amendments, 18A, 20A and 24.

Following our usual format, we'll have staff giving presentations on those different amendments before you come in to give testimony if you wish to take advantage of that and discuss with staff or have some questions answered. At this time we need to go ahead and close the meeting to discuss some appoints on SEDAR 28, we'll look forward to seeing everyone at 5:30.

MR. HARRIS: Mr. Chairman, while people are clearing the room, can I ask Theo a question? Theo, the list that we had for SEDAR looks longer than we've seen in the past; is that a function of the new stock assessment scientists that the Science Center has employed? Are they fully up and running now and able to do these assessments on their own?

DR. BRAINERD: We are phasing them in so not all of them would conducting stock assessments on their own in 2012, but some will be.

(Whereupon, the open session adjourned at 4:20 o'clock p.m., December 6, 2011.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

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PLEASE SIGN IN

So that we will have a record of your attendance at each meeting and so that your name may be included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown below.

SEDAR COMMITTEE MEETING
 December 6, 2011
 Raleigh, NC 27605

P.O. BOX/STREET
CITY, STATE & ZIP

AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

807 Hampton Way Merritt Island FL

<u>NAME & ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>AREA CODE & PHONE NUMBER</u>	<u>EMAIL ADDRESS</u>	<u>P.O. BOX/STREET</u>	<u>CITY, STATE & ZIP</u>
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Paul Nelson	912-222-9206	SUSAN@WORK.SG	Post Office	FL 32115
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Helen Talside - The Wacker	727-4369-6613	helen@wacker.com	301 Herbert St	FL 32115
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Spice Dosemark (PEB)			Post Office	FL 32115

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
 North Charleston, SC 29405
 843-571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10

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SEDAR COMMITTEE MEETING
 December 6, 2011
 Raleigh, NC 27605

P.O. BOX/STREET
 CITY, STATE & ZIP
 32120-9351
 PO Box 9351

AREA CODE &
 PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL
 ADDRESS

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