

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SEDAR COMMITTEE

**Hutchinson Island Marriott
Stuart, FL**

June 10, 2013

SUMMARY MINUTES

SEDAR Committee

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Doug Haymans
Tom Swatzel

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Martha Bademan

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Observers/Participants:

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Dr. Jack McGovern
Dr. Luiz Barbieri
Lt. Morgan Fowler

Monica Smit-Brunello
Otha Easley
Dr. Marcel Reichart
John Sanchez

Other Participants Attached

The SEDAR Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Plantation Room of the Hutchinson Island Marriott, June 10, 2013, and was called to order at 4:35 o'clock p.m. by Chairman David Cupka.

MR. CUPKA: We're going to go ahead and get into the SEDAR Committee. As I've mentioned, we have a lot to cover under SEDAR, and also a portion of this meeting will be closed at the end to discuss some appointments to some of the stock assessments. The first order of business is approval of the agenda. Are there any additions to the agenda? Seeing none; then the agenda is approved.

Next is approval of the minutes from our last meeting. Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes? Seeing none; then our minutes are approved. That brings us down to Item 3, which is a SEDAR Activities Update. I'm going to ask John to give us an overview on that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I'm going to take these from the bottom and work up in the way things are listed in the overview, because we will have a bit of discussion when we get to what is currently listed first. The SEDAR 28 Assessments for Spanish mackerel and cobia; those were reviewed by the SSC at the April meeting. Recommendations have come forth from that, and they will be discussed later during this week.

The same for black sea bass; the update was reviewed in April; and as all of you know, you dealt with black sea bass during a special council meeting earlier in May. SEDAR 36 is going to address snowy grouper. There has been some data scoping and initial compilations of data are now underway, and there will be an assessment conducted through a series of webinars; and looking for this to come to the SSC in October.

This brings us to SEDAR 32, which is a benchmark assessment of blueline tilefish and gray trigger. That is underway and the data workshop has been held. They're getting ready to prepare for the assessment phase of it. This brings me to an issue that we will need to discuss. In getting all the data compiled and starting to look at how the different datasets compare to each other and looking at what information they're learning about the fish from the data that they had, they recognized an issue within the MARMAP program and the information that we have through the CPUEs.

What they have noticed is that there is sort of a juxtaposition here of some growth patterns, some latitudinal-specific growth patterns within the fishery. It is overlapping with some changes in the MARMAP over time, and there have been efforts to expand coverage and such and increase the range of that survey, and in this stock we have recognized a bit of an issue. It kind of came to light in looking at trying to understand really why the fishery CPUE and the fishery-independent CPUEs were really not matching up.

This is the kind of thing that regularly goes on with these assessments, and sometimes we discover things that we're not quite sure what is going on in looking at the growth patterns and stuff in the fishery and different parts. What I've learned is that it is likely that this assessment for triggerfish is going to be a bit delayed from the other stocks within SEDAR 32; and we may

need to consider alternative means of getting the review done as opposed to delaying the overall full project. I think Bonnie would probably like to comment on that a little bit.

DR. PONWITH: Yes, thanks for teeing that up, John, and that is indeed the case where we've got some aged/length data that aren't matching the direction we would expect to the index of abundance. This inner conflict of two statistics within the same database we believe really does bear having a closer look at.

Now, there are a couple of things we could do. We could try to just tough it out and push through and try and get that stock assessment done on the same schedule as was originally conceived. My concern is that if this is a systematic issue – in other words, if this is a phenomenon that we're seeing with more than just this one species, taking our time and understanding this phenomenon is going to be worth a lot in being able to evaluate it.

Basically, what it is, is we can mathematically do corrections for changes in abundance relative to the changes in actual sampling locations; but what we're finding is that we may have a size selectivities change with certain depth strata that we're sampling at, and that is what we're looking into.

John is correct; the proposal is to take our time and understand this pattern that we're seeing in the data, to actually use the time we would normally be spending modeling – you know, generating the stock assessment, to actually tease apart and understand this observation that we're seeing in the data.

Then once we're comfortable with how we want to handle this mathematically, then continue the stock assessment. That puts that assessment offset somewhat from the assessment timeframe that we set up for blueline tile and this stock. One proposal would be to hold the review workshop as originally planned for blueline tile and then do a desk audit for gray triggerfish once that assessment is completed.

What that means; a desk audit means instead of conducting a face-to-face, walk through the beginning to the end period review; it would be to generate a very comprehensive assessment report and have that report studied by the peer review panel and have them submit their comments on that after the formal peer review meeting is over.

MR. CUPKA: Well, that seems like a reasonable approach. I think we do need to move ahead with blueline tilefish, but I guess we would need a motion then to do a desk review on triggerfish, and that should cover it; shouldn't it? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Mr. Chairman, I guess I will go ahead and offer up a motion that we modify SEDAR 32 to incorporate a desk review for gray triggerfish.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, we have a motion; is there a second? Seconded by Ben. **Is there any discussion on the motion? Is there any objection? Seeing none; then that motion is approved.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay, thank you for dealing with that so promptly. We definitely appreciate it. The final thing is you have the updated SEDAR schedule that lets you look ahead for what is going on through 2014. That is the final thing on progress summary. The next item is the steering committee recommendations. Do you want to move into that, David?

MR. CUPKA: Yes, go ahead.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay, the steering committee's last meeting was in February. They discussed the schedule for 2013 and 2014, which you have in the overview there. It summarized what is coming up. As you can see in 2013, as we just said, we're working on triggerfish and blueline; getting the snowy standard. We have got the black sea bass update. Florida is working on hogfish.

In 2014 we're going to be looking ahead to the red snapper benchmark. This is expected to be a pretty involved assessment, as you can imagine, with the regulations that have been in place for the last couple of years and what that does to the data sources. And then also a red porgy benchmark because of the issues that were noted with red porgy when we looked at the last update; then a gag update and Florida expecting to providing us a black grouper update.

MR. CUPKA: And we do have a recommendation from the SSC; but questions first.

MS. BECKWITH: Well, this is specifically to a concern I had expressed to Ben previously that I'm hoping John can just speak to. I had expressed some concerns to Ben about doing a benchmark on king mackerel when there is currently a low in the population abundance, and there is some strong anecdotal information of a strong year class that hasn't yet recruited potentially causing a decrease in the ACL followed in quick succession by an increase in abundance. I didn't know if you could maybe speak to that. I have heard some concerns from North Carolina king mackerel fishermen on that potential and I just wanted to have that on the record.

MR. CARMICHAEL: King mackerel will get started late this year with the data workshop and carry over into next. I can comment on that just in general terms of how the assessments and population dynamics should work. Basically, just because you're in a population that maybe has a bad year class moving through it, you don't expect that to translate into particularly bad things in terms of the assessment just because the assessment is happening sort of on the heels of that.

The assessment is going to reflect whatever you expect the population to be going to in the longer term and how you get there in the short term is going to be driven by what the particular year class abundance is. It is kind of the flipside of black sea bass. We knew there was a really big year class out there; and as a result the council saw that there was a potential for higher yields. Higher yields may be expected to be sustainable over the long term.

If king mackerel turns out to be in a situation where there has been some less than expected recruitment, then maybe yields will be down in the short term; and how fast they go back, of course, depends on how poor that year class may be and whether it is just one or what have you. In the case of king mackerel, it is a pretty established assessment. There have been a lot of

assessments done of that stock over the years, and we'll probably have a little better insight than we do for some others.

It will come down to what information we have on those year classes and how close these events are to kind of the terminal year and whether or not these ages have recruited to many of the fisheries, so we can understand really what the consequences are. At least in terms of the general question of should we be concerned about the timing of the benchmark relative to a year class, Anna, I don't really think so.

Its consequences are going to exist regardless of the timing when we do the assessment. It is just in some cases if we don't do the assessment, we may not know. We could end up causing damage to a stock if we continue to fish at a level that isn't sustainable because of some bad recruitment events.

MR. HARTIG: The interesting thing about this stock is there are quite a few big fish in it, and they're much harder to catch in any quantity. It is just the reverse. The fishermen have asked me how can the king mackerel really be in trouble; there are all these great big fish out there? I said, "Well, there is no year class coming up behind them."

That is a concern, but don't they say, "Well, if the fishery is overfished; shouldn't we have smaller fish"; but it is just the opposite in king mackerel. We have got a fairly decent number of large fish still in the population but no real evidence of recruitment in the last six years. It is just different and it is hard to explain.

DR. DUVAL: Anna, the concern you were hearing was it may be too soon to do a benchmark assessment from some folks? Some of the comments that I have gotten is how are you going to do a benchmark assessment on king mackerel at least from some of the guys I have been talking to at least around Southport. It was in regards to is it the right time to do an –

MS. BECKWITH: Right.

MR. CUPKA: Are there any other comments? One of the things we do need to look at, I guess, John, is there is a steering committee scheduled for this fall where we will be trying to prioritize the work for 2015. One of the things the SSC has recommended prioritizing a scamp benchmark over a tilefish update in 2015. If there is any desire on the part of the council to do that, we need to know that before the steering committee meeting. Will this be the last opportunity or September?

MR. CARMICHAEL: September.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, so we can change that in September if we need to or recommend changing it, but I need for you to be thinking about that in the meantime and we will revisit that in September. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and that crosses over into sort of our general thing about getting recommendations for the steering committee. Here in Table 2 it shows you what we're looking

at for the future, 2015, '16, '17, and that is where the SSC recommendation with scamp staying on there as opposed to, say, tilefish. And here in bold is the black sea bass update because we have projections through '13, '14 and '15, so we will need something for black sea bass.

Whether it is a projection update or a full assessment update is something to be discussed, but that is definitely something that will need to be done some time during 2015; maybe late 2015 and rolling over into early 2015 as we just did this last update. You can see looking at getting three or four stocks in 2015.

This is the kind of workload that we're dealing with are the things that the council would like to have assessed; and as you notice even in 2015 there are five things without a number beside them, and that means they have not been assigned a resource.

What the steering committee is going to need to do in their fall 2013 meeting is decide which stocks are actually going to get done in 2015 and say which four out of this eight which is currently listed; or nine actually at this time that is currently listed. If you guys have any insight now; that would be good, but certainly the rubber is going to hit the road in September when we're going to be looking for some hard decisions.

MR. CUPKA: And again it is important to make these decisions ahead of time so there is adequate time to get the biological materials and samplings that are needed for the assessment.

MR. HARTIG: Last night we had that informal meeting with the tilefish endorsement holders. There was quite a bit of uncertainty in that last tilefish assessment; and I guess the uncertainty is causing the numbers of fish to be down considerably from what they could possibly be if we had informed the assessment better on recruitment.

We have got some information that we're compiling now that will inform recruitment we think better, anyway. Basically having said that, in an update you're not going to be able to include a new indices of abundance for tilefish, so could you include that in a standard assessment; a new indices?

MR. CARMICHAEL: We talked about that when designing the standards; and the rule that was sort of put in there – the guidance that was given was that if it is coming out of a data source that has been evaluated through another assessment, then we would allow that to come in. If it is an entirely new data source and it hasn't been through any type of peer review, then really that is the type of thing that would trigger a benchmark.

MR. HARTIG: And that is what I thought.

MR. CUPKA: Are there other comments? Again, be thinking about this before September because we will need to finalize those recommendations in September. Okay, John, next is our ORCS Workshop Report.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The SSC Chair, Luiz Barbieri, is here to give you an update on the second ORCS Workshop. We completed that work prior to the April SSC meeting and have some recommendations for consideration. I believe there is a presentation.

DR. BARBIERI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to address the committee. I just want to review very briefly what we did at this last SSC meeting and the last ORCS Workshop in addressing the application of the ORCS methodology for the development of ABC recommendations.

Just to refresh your memory, the ORCS method derives catch level recommendations based on exploitation level, stock status and vulnerability. The basic idea is that you're dealing with catch-only scenario stocks for which we don't have quantitative stock assessments; and you're trying to scale your catch level recommendations based on this criteria up here, but also taking into consideration the stock status, whether a stock is lightly, moderately or heavily exploited.

If the stock is lightly exploited, we either cap the catch levels at that level or allow for a limited increase in catch because there is a very low probability that the stock is undergoing overfishing or being overfished given the fact that the exploitation level is light. If the stock is moderately exploited; then the idea is to just cap the catches at a certain level, not necessarily allow it to increase but don't get to a decrease in the catches either because the exploitation level is just moderate.

Then for the heavily exploited stocks that are possibly overfished, then the method takes into account a reduction of catches to end that overfishing. So, basically, just the main tenets of the methodology so as we go through you understand what we are trying to achieve. I decided to go straight to the bottom line, Mr. Chairman, given the time of day and the fact that the committee has seen a whole lot of materials already.

This is the bottom line of the results of the application of the ORCS methodology. We ended up with one stock being a low probability of undergoing overfishing; one that is moderately low; several of them that are moderate; and then we have some that are moderate high. The bottom line is that you can see here what the current ABC recommendations are – actually, the current ABCs for these stocks as approved, what the maximum catches in the dark blue here are for those stocks over a specific period of time that the committee decided to use.

Then you get the ORCS ABC up here in the light blue. The thing to notice here is for stocks that are low, moderately low or moderate exploitation levels, the ABC is a bit higher than the maximum catch for those stocks. It provides a cap on that catch level; but because that cap is put above the maximum catch that have been recorded over that period of time that the committee used, those fluctuations in stock size will not trigger management actions.

You create a zone there that the stock can fluctuate over, and we put our catch limit – that cap just above that zone, and this will prevent those choke species from being the cause for all the major fisheries being closed or getting additional regulations. But then as you get here into the moderate high risk of overexploitation, you can see that the ABC is below – is above what we have in the books now, but below that maximum catch.

In that case, given that the risk of exploitation is higher, for those stocks the method actually provided a cap, but the cap is below the maximum catch, so it reduces catches a little bit to prevent that overfishing level. Based on completion of the application of the method for those stocks, the SSC is requesting council approval to, number one, adopt the ORCS approach for catch-only stocks.

In this case we would modify – and we need your review and approval of this action – modify the ABC Control Rule. Right now for Tier 4 of the ABC Control Rule, for catch-only stocks we have the decision table, the decision rule. In this case we would put ORCS in that Tier 4, and in Tier 5 we would apply the decision rule for stocks that do not qualify for the application of the ORCS approach, because in this case those stocks don't even have a reliable catch series.

There are two things here that we need you to review and provide us some recommendations. One is whether you approve the use of the ORCS method for Tier 4 of the ABC Control Rule and whether you approve development of a new Tier 5 for the stocks that do not qualify to be under the ORCS methodology approach.

One other thing that we need your review and guidance on also is this risk factor determining the buffer between OFL and ABC for these ORCS stocks. The last step in the application of the ORCS methodology is the application of this scalar to then generate the buffer between OFL and ABC.

During our ORCS Workshop we had council members, SSC members and industry AP members there to help us apply the methodology and come up with those recommendations. At that point we went for the application of this risk strategy here outlined in Alternative A, which means to go from OFL to ABC we multiplied OFL by 0.75, and that was applied to the low risk, the moderate risk and the high risk stocks.

There are other options there in terms of the application of those scalars to best capture what you consider to be your risk tolerance level for managing these stocks. During the workshop, we went ahead and applied this Alternative A here, so we could complete the application of the method and bring the results for your review and approval, but we need your guidance on whether this is the strategy in terms of the application of the scalar for risk that you find is the best.

Again, here are the main topics that we need you to comment on and provide us guidance. I have some other slides later on in the presentation that involves some more of the details of how the method is applied and all the different steps. I just thought that I would go for the short version, Mr. Chairman, and pull up those slides later in case there were more specific questions. That completes my presentation, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CUPKA: Thank you, Luiz. Are there questions for Luiz? Well, we do need to move ahead I guess and see if we want to recommend to the Full Council action in regard to these three items here. As we've mentioned before to fully adopt the ORCS approach dealing with the ABC Control Rule, we will need to address this through a plan amendment to incorporate I guess it would be 4 and 5 if we were to go that route. Is that correct, Monica?

We have got a recommendation to create a new Tier 4 to handle the ORCS in the ABC Control Rule, which would take a plan amendment. Then we have got a recommendation to create a new Tier 5, which would be part of the ABC Control Rule. Both of those would have to go through a plan amendment; would they not?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Right; I agree.

MR. CUPKA: Well, we would need a motion to recommend that. Again, I appreciate Luiz being here. I guess Ben and Charlie and some of us may have a little more familiarity with this having sat through these ORCS workshops, but this is an opportunity if you have any questions of Luiz. Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I wasn't going to ask a question; I was just going to offer a motion, so whenever you're ready.

MR. CUPKA: I'm ready.

DR. DUVAL: I would move that we recommend to the Full Council to adopt the ORCS approach for Tier 4, catch-only stocks; and to move the decision table approach to a new Tier 5.

MR. CUPKA: We have a motion and a second by Ben. **Is there discussion on the motion? Is there any objection? Seeing none; then that motion is approved.** The third item has to deal with the scalar used for evaluating risk; and as Luiz pointed out, Approach A was the one that the ORCS Working Group suggested we use, but certainly we could use any of those approaches if we want to. The one now kind of weighs everything the same, whether it is a high risk or a low risk. Doug, did you have a comment?

MR. HAYMANS: Well, are there any examples within this that we can look at?

MR. CUPKA: Luiz, do you have a table on there?

DR. BARBIERI: The short answer, Doug, is, no, we don't have examples. However, looking at this graph here – that will be Slide 2 in the presentation – you can see the outcome of having applied that Alternative A in terms of the risk application for the scalars. Our overall conclusion from the ORCS Workshop perspective – the working group perspective was that having used that Alternative A, we had achieved what we felt was the intent of the method, which was to cap the catch levels; you know, to have ABCs that would cap catch levels for low, moderately low, and moderate stocks at a level that does not interfere with that natural variability in stock size, but that would cause some reduction in the moderate/high stocks for which the risk of overfishing is higher.

At the end of the workshop our consensus basically was that the application of that Alternative A had been successful, but obviously that is a decision that involves the risk policy and this should be your decision to evaluate and discuss. Unfortunately, we did not prepare other scenarios that would take some of those other alternatives into account.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I would expect that given that there is four alternatives here, this is something that you likely would – as part of whatever amendment this is done in, you would have to consider alternatives for what your risk policy is going to be and how you wish to apply it.

We know from our initial discussions with setting OFLs and ABCs, that trying to quantify risk and make a decision about risk is kind of tough. I think we're going to have a lot of discussion about that as we try to choose amongst these alternatives and come up with an objective way of doing so.

MR. HARTIG: Don't we have numbers somewhere in the snapper document dealing with some of this where we went up in dolphin? Some went down and some went up. Don't we have some numbers associated with some kind of – Michelle, do you remember where that is of what that is?

DR. DUVAL: There was an Excel File that was sent around that is I think entitled "ORCS ABC and OFL", and that was e-mailed around I believe. It has all the different stocks that we discussed and then their risk of overexploitation; the scalar that was used to get to a catch statistic and subsequent quantity that is not being referred to as OFL, so to speak, and then the ABC.

Then I think for comparison, you got the ABCs from Regulation Amendment that are moving forward as part of the MRIP estimation. I think that is all contained in that Excel File along with some explanatory language below that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: And that is basically what you see here in this table just with species' names and actual poundage values as opposed to these relative measures. As Luiz has said, these are all at 75 percent adjustment. If you chose, say, a 50 percent adjustment for these ones that are over here on the moderate/high, then obviously the current ABC is going to come down to half of whatever the maximum catch level is as opposed to, say, 75 percent of it.

We really haven't done anything to pursue these, and I think you're going to have to think of what sort of criteria would you consider. What the SSC discussed was the productivity, and there is the document that does the productivity/susceptibility analysis that was considered when we did the first ABCs.

The SSC looked at that some and if you want to go that route and use that as a metric, they probably would like to revise that and update it for a number of our stocks, but it is certainly something that would give you a number that classifies the stocks as a way of choosing amongst these different adjustment factors.

MR. CUPKA: And I don't think we're going to make a decision here today, but I think, John, as you've suggested those four alternatives would be good alternatives when we go to do a plan amendment to look at this and there would be a lot more discussion of it at that point. The council may decide to go with Alternative A or they may decide to go with another one. I don't

expect a motion today to approve any certain alternative, but there will be a lot more discussion on it. I think those are good alternatives to consider as we move ahead with an amendment.

DR. DUVAL: I was just going to say that the different alternatives that Luiz showed in his slide all came directly from the ORCS report, which came out a couple of years ago now, and that was a large-scale, collaborative effort to go through and develop that methodology and put that report together. I think just to Doug's question, those were just examples from that report.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, any other questions or comments? John.

MR. JOLLEY: Just one; this process even when we have data is speculative. I know we don't like to use that term to some degree, but this is even more speculative because of the dearth of data. I am wondering if on a scale of one to ten in terms of speculation to try to give us a hint of risk or how we judge risk this ORCS methodology would be. If ten is the highest risk and one is the lowest; where would you put this methodology in an assessment of speculation?

DR. BARBIERI: Well, I would prefer myself to actually substitute the use of the term of speculation for expert judgment, which it involves – sometimes I think that in general, to be frank, we fool ourselves in thinking that the only way to objective is to use quantitative methods. That is not necessarily the case.

I think the idea of going through this workshop process is that you use people's professional judgment and expertise. Everybody that we had in the room was there to contribute some level of their expertise, and we used our collective expert judgment there to make some recommendations that as you go through that whole process you realize it is not really speculative.

It is more application of your judgment at times and the use of your prior knowledge and inferences; so, no, it is not quantitative in nature, not to the extent that we would like to have it, but I would say that it provides guidance that I consider scientifically credible in addressing those issues.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You didn't give him a number, though.

DR. BARBIERI: No, I did not; because giving that number – you know, scientists are very uncomfortable giving numbers that cannot be backed up, and I cannot provide you, other than my own personal opinion, what that number would be. I can tell you that as we look –

MR. JOLLEY: Are you saying five or six?

DR. BARBIERI: Maybe worse.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Plus or minus five.

DR. BARBIERI: Here is the situation that I think it would be helpful for the council to consider. We have developed a multi-tiered ABC Control Rule to take those things into account. I think

honestly what the committee is trying to do is to try to help you provide a structured approach upon which you can make those ACL recommendations or determinations in a way that is structured and defensible.

Our Tier 1, using the P-star approach, that is the Cadillac version. With that we have most of the quantitative assessment results and we can to some extent properly quantify uncertainty, and we feel very comfortable applying that method. If we're dealing with stocks for which we don't have those, then we go to our Tier 2, that depletion-based stock reduction analysis.

If you're dealing with a stock for which even that is not possible, we go to this DC-AC, the depletion-corrected average catch. Well, then unfortunately there are still stocks for which you have to make catch level recommendations that you have to determine some ACLs, and the committee then is developing these additional tiers here to – even though those are not very quantitative in nature, they can provide us some recommendations based on their expert judgment.

You can see here along the five tiers, the ORCS is near the bottom as Tier 4, so the level of confidence that we have here is very low. We know are already dealing with a situation that is highly uncertain. This method here is not comparable to that Tier 1, but at least we can make an ABC recommendation after having a workshop where we have a group of experts looking at all the information available and make a judgment.

In that case I don't consider it to be totally subjective and arbitrary. Tier 5, we go one level even lower. We know that these bottom tiers here are already in a situation that is undesirable, but we're trying to provide some structure there to make those recommendations. I don't know if that addresses your –

MR. CUPKA: One positive aspect of this I think is that this is an opportunity to use the experience and the expertise of the fishermen through this process. We actually had AP members there, so it is not just a group of scientists shooting around some numbers. The approach and the method actually incorporates the knowledge from these people who are out there on the water every day, and I think that is a real positive thing. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: And you mentioned just what I was going to elaborate on; and David is right. The next step with this would be, since there was only council area coverage at that meeting, is to look at fishermen throughout the range and then get a better handle on it. It is good, and the characterization by the industry participants was important in going through this. Your end products are a product part of that. To say what David said, to get more people from the entire range of the stocks to look at this, we could get a much more informed number going into at least our part of the characterization

MR. CUPKA: Are there any other comments or questions? If not we're going to move ahead, and thank you, Luiz, for that presentation. John, the next thing is our research prioritization. That is behind Attachment 6, and we will go over that next.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Each year we bring to you a research prioritization plan. It is part of the Revised Magnuson Act to ask that the councils develop research and priorities and submit them to the agency, so we do it annually. These have been reviewed by the SSC in April, so we're asking for your comment, guidance and hopefully ultimately approval of the research plan – it was Attachment 6, as David said – for this year.

It is pretty much similar to what you have seen the couple of years. Things are highlighted here that we're trying to address some of the changes, getting full information on stock status, say, OFL and MSY and the SAFE Reports and the details there, weights and numbers and landings and discards and economic information.

Then the other is requesting some increase in funding or restore the funding for the MARMAP Program. We always end up seeing how important MARMAP is to all of our stock assessments, and it has been very difficult to have them maintain their productivity and performance in the face of budget cuts. We need to expand these programs and not have them be subject to budget cuts and lose our valuable fishery-independent information as we try to figure out what is going on with so many of these populations.

MR. CUPKA: Hopefully, you all have had a chance to review this. Are there any comments?

DR. DUVAL: I seem to recall that at the SSC meeting there was a question asked about how these get translated into research priorities I think for cooperative research. I wasn't sure if I actually saw that in this document. I guess maybe what I'm asking is, is there a way to address that concern that was brought up by the SSC?

MR. CUPKA: Not just cooperative research, but it is MARFIN, also, isn't it? Maybe Bonnie can address that.

DR. PONWITH: Each year I go through and revisit the call for proposals to make sure that the call for proposals aligns with the contemporary notion of priorities throughout the southeast jurisdiction. If the council has recommendations based on SSC requirements for additional data, those priorities certainly could be taken into consideration.

We tend to avoid being prescriptive in the FFO. In other words, in the call for proposals it tends to be more general; we need better ways to sample juvenile fish or something like that. We don't actually line out very, very specific details; because then if you do that, it can actually hamper innovation.

Everybody runs to the ball instead of looking a little more broadly. Certainly, if you received input from the SSC and the council concurs that those are high priorities, that is the best avenue is to – you know, once they're blessed by the council, I can take them into consideration in the release or any modifications made to the call for proposals.

MR. CUPKA: Michelle, did you have a followup?

DR. DUVAL: I was going to make a motion, but I think Doug maybe had a comment.

MR. HAYMANS: I was just going to ask a couple of things real quick. Is any of this research plan contingent on increased funding to MARMAP; if it is not increased to 850, there are things you can't do?

MR. CARMICHAEL: No; this is just what the council would like to see done. It is not really a plan of attack that someone goes and implements and works from. It is our priorities that we're requesting work into people's plans for what they actually do.

MR. HAYMANS: So, number four on that list, even though we would love to see it; I mean, evaluating MPAs for their effect on overfishing and restoration of stocks, that is probably not going to happen between now and 2015?

MR. CARMICHAEL: That is a loaded question.

MR. HAYMANS: I know that is a loaded question. Mr. Chairman, I would be ready to make a motion if Michelle is not.

DR. DUVAL: I was just going to make a motion that accept we the Research Priorities Plan.

MR. CUPKA: We have a motion and a second by Doug. Discussion on the motion? Again, obviously, not all of these things are going to get done. It is kind of a wish list in a way, I guess, but at least it provided some guidance on the sorts of things we'd like to see research done on. **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none; then that motion is approved.**

That brings us down to SEDAR approvals. We have a number of items to approve and schedule and terms of reference, and then we're going to close the meeting and have some appointments to some of the SEDAR. Also, I guess we have to revisit a couple of decisions we made earlier to see if we want to further amend them. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay, the first item would be SEDAR 38, which is the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic king mackerel, and you have the terms of reference for the benchmark assessment. These have been reviewed by the SSC. You also have the overall project schedule. These are offered for approval.

The other item that David mentioned that we may as well talk about here has to do with the management parameters and projection specifications. This comes out of not doing a couple of things that had been maybe taken a bit for granted; not specifically in the request, but typically provided such projections that broke out yield in terms of landings and discards on future years.

What we tried to do here is provide a bit more detail in terms of what the council would like to see for the management parameters and for the projections. Most of what you see here in this table is actually already a part of what goes into the SEDAR documents, the stock assessments. All the basic tables that I have here were pulled from the management specification sheet, which is part of the introductory segments, and it is a chance for the council to specify, for example, what is the MFMT that is in place.

If you're looking at an alternative MFMT, the management side can specify what that is so that it gets evaluated in the stock assessment. This basic table here that is Table 1 – and let me go on down to king mackerel – this is the kind of information that is normally specified – say, for now the MFMT last time was based on 30 percent SPR; not actually an Fmsy estimate, so that would be what is in there now.

What I have added here is a column based on what we learned at the SSC where we looked at the medians of the base runs from the Monte Carlo/Bootstrap PDFs, so we've learned at the SSC it is very helpful to have both of those. The SSC, in October, will be talking some about maybe making recommendations to you based on those medians as opposed to a single point estimate from a single base run.

They won't be able to do that until October and we need to get these terms of reference done now, so we're kind of going with the two-column approach here, as you saw in the SSC report for Spanish and cobia and black sea bass, as well. The other part is just projection information. A lot of this was already included in there as well. What has been added is asking for landings and discards and providing the probabilities for both overfished and overfishing versus sometimes we don't always get both of those parameters.

The other important part is going out with the number of years where we ask for projections. The P-star approaches tend to give us short-term projections and that just seems to be the nature of the approach; and the other which are more deterministic do account for some uncertainties can go for a longer period. I think we would like to have all of this included.

The question is then whether it becomes, say, an appendix to the terms of reference or part of this management specification. The experience at SEDAR, speaking as the SEDAR Program Manager, is that the Gulf for a while was putting a lot of this kind of information as an appendix to the terms of reference, and it was a bit awkward and maybe didn't work as well as desired.

That has been abandoned and now the full details such as this are being asked for in the management specification sheet. The important thing is that the council weighs in on this; and when we go through this, we make sure we understand what is needed both from the SSC perspective and the council perspective, and that it is specified.

One advantage of doing it in the management specification sheet is that if something were to change, say, in the nine months or more between doing the terms of reference and actually getting started on the assessment is that can be adjusted without having to go through something that has been approved by motion at the council level.

MR. CUPKA: Certainly, I think the proper place to put it is in the management specifications and then we have got it.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Since it is now in the management specifications, I don't think that we would need a motion. I think it would be nice to have a motion saying you approve the terms of reference and that you approve these parameters, the management specifications and projection

specifications, so that we know that you have looked at it and you have seen what is in there and this is what you need to ask for.

MR. WAUGH: Does it carry any less importance or any less chance of getting accomplished if it is just in the management specifications? Is that an issue because we need to make sure we get this, and I think that is the more important aspect rather than where it goes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I don't think it does because they are accustomed to looking at this to know the types of things. There are some things in the terms of reference now, say, with regard to projections where they say project F-target, and they're accustomed to looking in here to see what F-target; or if they're going to project the Fmsy, if it has been specified at F 30 percent, that would be what they would need to look at.

They should be kind of used to looking at both, it seems like. The issue that we had the last time was not specifying some things in as much detail as we should, like landings and discards. I think as long as it is specified in here and it is included in the management specifications, it should ensure that we are getting what we want.

MR. CUPKA: Michelle, you look like you're ready to do something.

DR. DUVAL: Well, I was going to make a motion that we accept the terms of reference or approve the terms of reference for SEDAR 38 and the management specifications.

MR. CUPKA: We have a motion; is there a second? Seconded by Ben. **Any discussion on the motion? Is there any objection? Seeing none; then that motion is approved.** John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The next item would be the schedule for SEDAR 38. I guess the highlights are the data workshop is going to December 9 through 13 this year; assessment workshop with an actual physical workshop in Miami in March 2014; review is in mid-August 2014; and hopefully the plan then has it available to the councils in mid-September, so it should come to the SSC at their October meeting.

MR. CUPKA: Are there questions in regard to the schedule? All right, if not, I would entertain **a motion that we approve the schedule for SEDAR 38.**

DR. DUVAL: **So moved, Mr. Chairman.**

MR. HARTIG: Second.

MR. CUPKA: We have a motion; seconded by Ben. Discussion on the motion? Is there any objection. Did you have a point, Gregg?

MR. WAUGH: Yes, just a question of John. Is there anything that the council can do in this schedule to ensure we don't have a situation like we have with black sea bass occur again where we don't get the assessment to the SSC in time to where they can review it, and then we're not getting the projections until the day of the SSC meeting?

They're not seeing the projections until the actual presentation is given, which they get at the meeting. This puts them in a very awkward position. It puts the council staff and the regional staff in a very awkward position where we don't have the projection results in time and makes it very difficult for us to complete the documents.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, I don't there is beyond the schedule which they're approving, which has the report due well before the SSC meeting and well before any briefing book deadlines and then terms of reference that ask for the projections to be provided as part of the report.

The projections are actually part of the assessment workshop report, so the idea is that those are going to be reviewed by the review workshop, so they should be done well in advance. The one thing that we always know may not be provided is the P-star run based on the actual value the SSC recommends because we don't know what that is at that time.

What is in there now is, of course, asking for 50 percent, which we know that we always need. If an SSC has recommended a P-star in the case of like king mackerel where they have recommended 27.5 percent, then that is in there in the specifications, but I think that is as much as we can do in advance in terms of asking for this.

MR. WAUGH: And do we specify the turnaround time for once the SSC specifies what their P-star is to get those results back? I think it would be helpful for the assessment people if they know that ahead of time and so that is a task that is laid out; so if it is two weeks, then they know two weeks after the SSC meeting we have to build in time to have those projections done.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That is normally specified in the overview for the SSC meeting where it relates to SSC completing the report. Most things are asked for within two weeks because the idea is that the SSC wraps up its report within that time.

MR. CUPKA: Okay, we have a motion on the floor. **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none; then that motion is approved.** We've got two terms of references we approved back in December, and I guess we need to go back and revisit those in terms of the specifications.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, that's right, we brought back the specifications for SEDAR 32 and SEDAR 36. It is the same similar stuff to make sure we get, for example, yields projected for landings and discards, status for biomass over the MSST as well as the Bmsy for the first year of management and then the different probabilities.

There are some words in the current terms of reference that deal with what is here in this Table 3, and I just converted this into a tabular format that shows what projection values should be done. One thing that is different is we're asking for 75 percent of Fmsy. If we look in our terms of reference over time, we used to ask for 65 percent, 75 percent and 85 percent because those were things the council considered at F-targets when you had an OY which was an F-target.

Since you have set ABC equals ACL equals OY, there is really not much need to look at all those different values. One thing is that if we can pare out some of these things that the council is really not using, then we have a better chance I think of getting on time the projections that we really need. That is why the 65 and the 85 have been dropped for these.

But, despite you setting your OY that way and the control rule about using the P-star, in some cases we have actually still made specifications based on the 75 percent of Fmsy, and we have certainly looked at that as being informative. Part of that is because of the short-term versus long-term nature of the projections.

Now, some of this is being talked about between the science center people that work on these projections and they're trying to come up with a bit more efficient way than the current P-star, which takes days and days to run. I've got my fingers crossed that we're going to roll out something a bit more efficient for SEDAR 32.

These are the ones that we have approved for – this top one is SEDAR 32. This are just fleshing out some of the details, as I said, asking for a 50 percent P-star. We don't currently specify the P-star in the terms of reference that have been approved so this would certainly be something that would be helpful.

Thirty-six is very similar. One thing is there is an MSST that is a little different. It is 75 percent of SSBmsy is what you approved. We have a rebuilding plan so that specified the T-rebuild. We would want projections out to the T-rebuild, and we want to see probabilities that we're making toward the rebuilding as well as staying above the minimum stock size threshold.

There are some little different entries in the table that reflect – for example, if we know at the last determination it was overfished, we need a projection to 2039 unless the stock has reached the rebuilt status by this point. We have probabilities of 50 percent and 30 percent for snowy grouper because the SSC has reviewed this and 30 percent was their preliminary recommendation, so that gives us a good starting point. I think, David, maybe a similar motion to approve the management specification for SEDAR 32 and SEDAR 36 would be helpful.

DR. DUVAL: Mr. Chairman, I move that we approve the management specifications for SEDARS 32 and 36.

MR. CUPKA: We have a motion; is there a second? Ben. **Discussion on the motion? Any objection? Seeing none; then that motion is approved.** I think that brings us down to appointments, John, in which case we need to go into closed session. We will take about a five-minute break so we can go into closed session and then we will come back and finish this up.

(Whereupon, the open session was adjourned at 5:40 o'clock p.m., June 10, 2013.)

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SEDAR Committee

Monday, June 10, 2013

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44	Delancey, Larry	delanceyl@dnr.sc.gov 14 min
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17	sandorf, scott	scott.sandorf@noaa.gov 79 min
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