

**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
SEDAR COMMITTEE**

**Doubletree Grand Key Resort  
Key West, Florida**

**June 8, 2015**

**SUMMARY MINUTES**

**SEDAR Committee:**

Ben Hartig, Chair  
Zack Bowen  
Jack Cox  
Charlie Phillips

Chris Conklin  
Mark Brown  
Dr. Michelle Duval  
Robert Beal

**Council Members:**

Mel Bell  
Chester Brewer  
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Dr. Jack McGovern  
Dr. Wilson Laney

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Dr. Mike Errigo  
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Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
Dr. Brian Chevront  
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**Observers/Participants:**

Dr. George Sedberry  
Dr. Marcel Reichert  
Erika Burgess  
Rick DeVictor

Dr. Luiz Barbieri  
Dr. Roy Crabtree  
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith  
Monica Smit-Brunello

Additional Observers Attached

The SEDAR Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Tortuga Ballroom, Doubletree Grand Key Resort, June 8, 2015, and was called to order at 4:05 o'clock p.m. by Chairman Ben Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: We're going to go ahead and get the SEDAR Committee started. The first item of business is approval of the agenda. Are there any changes to the agenda? Seeing none; the agenda is approved. The next item of business is approval of the minutes. Are there any corrections, deletions, changes to the minutes? Seeing none; the minutes are approved. That brings us to the activity update behind Attachment 1.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We have an update coming up for red grouper. The SSC reviewed the terms of reference for that. They also considered the type of assessment that should be conducted. Some of their discussion on the type centered around the new video information that is being collected for many of our species and whether or not there should be an update conducted of this in order to bring in the video data.

Luiz will probably talk about this more with his SSC report; but the general thought of the SSC was that the red grouper seemed to be well covered by the existing pot survey. The update could be done just updating that information. They did think that there should be some way – given that this has a good pot survey, that it would be nice to have some way to knit together the past and the future methods.

That is the other recommendation that you see here, which is their request to consider a workshop devoted toward that topic be considered, perhaps something the council could support. Obviously. We would need a lot of help from the agency to do that. Given that, they put forth recommendations for red grouper terms of reference as an update assessment, and they are offered here for you to consider. It would be done based on the SEDAR 19 model with data through 2014.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions about the TORs for the red grouper assessment? I don't see any.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, we should have a motion to approve those.

**DR. DUVAL: I move that we approve the red grouper update assessment terms of reference.**

**MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle, second by Zack. Any discussion on the motion? Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: The next item is the recommendation for the Video Index Workshop. Seeing the SSC's recommendation on that, is this something the committee would give us as staff guidance to begin pursuing?

DR. DUVAL: I move to direct staff to begin a process to develop a video trap index across multiple species.

MR. HARTIG: Second by Zack. A question for Bonnie I guess from me.

DR. PONWITH: I would not anticipate -- when you say staff, do you mean SEDAR staff. So you are directing SEDAR's staff or is that council staff? When I think of a new index, that is a science activity, but the last workshop we did we held it under the auspices of SEDAR to be able to look at the video trap time series to develop an index for red snapper that has potential applicability. I guess I am just interested in a little clarity there.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I was considering the recommendations from the SSC to have a similar sort of calibration workshop, really. We did this for I think it was just specifically focused on red snapper, to be able to use a video index for that. It would be to, I think, use that same type of process to develop a video index for other species as appropriate. I guess the direction is really to council staff to move this forward.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that is the way I took it is council staff. We had worked on red snapper under the auspices of that assessment which was underway, and SEDAR was involved in helping to organize that. This would be crossing multiple species all within the South Atlantic. It may be more appropriate to fall under South Atlantic.

DR. PONWITH: Potentially a SEDAR special topics type of workshop, to pull all those data together and reach concurrence on how that index should be constructed. Do that once in framework and then say the decision has been made, cite that; and then only have to do additional work if you for some reason for some species feel as though you need to depart from that framework approach.

DR. DUVAL: That was my intent, sort of like the Best Practices Workshops that were heading down that road, so that we don't have to go back and rehash these decisions that are made.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, and that's fine. The only thing that I was wondering was, since the Center or Beaufort, whichever, in combination with Center scientists has already developed an index for red snapper; wouldn't the natural course of action be to continue development of those for others as well? I am just wondering do you see value in the way we're going here to help you get to where we want to go?

DR. PONWITH: I think this is the exact right way to go. It would be to use the red snapper work thus far as the point of departure, create a generic approach for all species that can be cited so that we're not reinventing hundreds of pages of documentation on a by-species basis, and then only document departures from that. I think that is a very good approach.

MR. CARMICHAEL: One minor clarification where I think that we can't just simply reference the red snapper effort is, as we mentioned from the SSC, we have a trap index which does a good job of indexing red grouper. That really wasn't the case at the time when we did red snapper. There weren't a lot of observations, so they weren't able to construct that index.

One of the unique things this would pursue would be when you have that trap index and then you have this new video data, how do you line those two up, knit them together, whatever you can do so that you can get as good a time series as possible. I think that is the important justification for us trying to do an additional effort beyond what was already done for the red snapper.

MR. HARTIG: I'm convinced. Any other discussion?

**DR. DUVAL:** The motion is move to direct SAFMC staff to begin a process to develop a video trap index across multiple species.

MR. HARTIG: Discussion. **Objection. Seeing none; that motion is approved.** The next item on our agenda is the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Research Plan. That is behind Attachment 2.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay, this is an annual exercise that we go through. We develop this research plan, review it by the SSC, by the council, submit it to the agency; and it then begins to influence the type of research and such that is done. What we've done over the past has started with a lot of what you see down here, a general list of priorities.

A lot of these have been carried over from year to year, and then there is an appendix down here with a lot of details about specific things that the council would like. Then in the last couple years began highlighting the top section up here in bold, which just highlighted more specific issues for each year. This is offered for your discussion and consideration. It has been reviewed by the SSC; and the things that are highlighted in yellow are the big changes that are added or additions or what have you for this current year.

DR. PONWITH: I've read through last year's version and certainly have studied this one carefully. The more I think about it the more I am concerned about this as the format. The reason is that it seems to do a mixed job. It does put forward some views on priorities for research, but it also seems to spend almost – more than 50 percent of the body of this is what seem like service agreements of this is work that we want done this year.

There is nothing wrong with a service agreement, except for that typically those are negotiated documents, negotiated agreements where two entities sit down and say we really think this is a priority, do we all agree that is a priority; and if so, what work do we think can technically and logistically and financially be carried out this year?

Make that agreement that this is the priority; and barring the unforeseen, that is an activity we're going to tackle this year. I'm seeing a lot of those types of things mixed in with the research priorities. I'm also seeing research priorities that aren't necessarily prioritized. For example, I'm seeing statements like by 2015 have adequate fishery-independent data collection for all managed species that fall on this list.

Basically that starts to feel a little bit like in 2015 we want world peace. That is a laudable goal and certainly something to tackled, but doesn't necessarily bubble up to feel like it is a priority. I could imagine that being a header; fishery-independent data collection, the gap analysis, this is the 100 percent requirement. We're well from that; but given that reality, if you got one dollar extra in your budget or one extra set of hands; what thing would you do above all things? Then you start feeling like this is a priority. Why does all this matter?

We know what work we as a body, both management and science, and advisory panels, want to do. What is wrong with not sharpening things or what is wrong with mixing service agreement type activities with priorities?

The reason is because this has become an extremely influential tool. When the FFO for S-K went out in the last cycle of solicitations, the place they went was to each of the fishery management councils' research priorities. Those priorities influenced what went into that call for proposals.

It is a very real way for the agency to say we hear your notion of priorities and we are taking it seriously and this is now a criterion for how fundable these proposals that come in are. From my standpoint, the South Atlantic Council has absolutely everything to gain by being pretty laser-point focused on setting those priorities and demonstrating there is kind of a notion of if not one to N, if we only got one thing, this would be the thing we would want.

The document also tackles fishery-independent but also fishery-dependent and biological samplings and things like that. It is great to have those different categories, but then it might be good to say again of these categories this is the category or these are the elements within this category that we hold as having the highest impact to our ability to successfully manage in the region.

I know that the plan was to review this and have discussions about it and potentially approve it; but what I would like to do is get these thoughts on the table for your consideration to, if not influence this version certainly influence the next version. The reason we ask the council for these is in the Science Center, if I went to any one scientist I could ask them what are your research priorities for the next five years; and they could in a nanosecond tell you.

You can't believe how much the following 6 or 10 or 100 things would do to make the science out of the Science Center better. We ask the council the exact same question, and that is because science priorities from scientists often have high overlap with science priorities for managers. But there are some very unique needs that managers will come up with; that we will manage better if we have this science need addressed.

That is a crucial, crucial perspective as we're setting these priorities and making decisions about what is going to get done at the expense of what is not going to get done. I just wanted to open the discussion with those thoughts. I stand ready to help the council and help the SSC in any way I can to maybe put a sharper point on some of these priorities.

DR. DUVAL: I guess, Bonnie for me it would be helpful if perhaps – and I don't expect you to answer this in 20 seconds; but it would be helpful for me if you could point out the things in this document that you consider to be sort of service agreement type of things. I think that would probably help in any suggested restructuring.

Then the other thing; this is one of those highlighted components – and this is on the top of PDF Page 4, but the council requested appropriate Science Center staff meet with the SSC at its spring meeting each year when these research priorities are reviewed. I think that would really be helpful to get some dovetailing of these. I think we've made a request like that in various forms in terms of having some Science Center staff present, I think particularly from the Assessment Branch at the SSC meetings.

I know that you all are often constrained by travel – I don't know, I guess I'll call them FTEs for lack of a better term – but limitations in how much travel you can do. But I think that would certainly go a ways in terms of helping to dovetail some of these things. I'll let other people talk.

MR. BELL: I appreciate your comments, Bonnie. When I read this; it's a plan. You think of a plan; the plan should be an executable plan. How does this plan get operationalized? How do we do this stuff? You described I think some of the issues. My question to you was going to be how do we reformat this or do it a different way that makes it very easy to execute?

You understand what the clear priorities are. Maybe that is some of what you described and some of what Michelle just talked about is the participation in the process of developing it; but you want it to be a plan that is – it can't just be a check the box because Magnuson says we have to do this. It needs to be something that we can really turn into following the priorities and getting things done.

My question to you was going to be, before you explained it, was how do we make it a better plan, a more executable plan that given funding considerations and managing various priorities; how do we make it happen? I was going to naively ask you how do we make this happen? How did we intend to make this happen? How do we intend to execute the plan? I think you describe some of maybe what needs to take place.

MR. HARTIG: Do you have anything to that point, Bonnie?

DR. PONWITH: I think the collaboration is where the power comes in. If I on the resource side am working with developing an administration budget, understanding not only my perception of requirements and priorities, but understanding them from a manager's perspective is really important.

In fact, if what I put forward as for this region these are the things that absolutely are our top priority, and they are hearing that in a harmonic from the management side within the council, at the CCC, through the solicitation process for S-K or cooperative research; there is power in that. It builds trust to hear it twice from two different speakers who say, yes, we agree this is the thing that needs to be done.

In fact I think that in our case some of our most effective discussions that we've ever had were in situations where the managers and the scientists had those discussions and said yes. The example is the process that brought us SEFIS. That was understanding in this region systematic overreliance on fishery-dependent data and stock assessments and how we get caught sometimes in a bind because of that; and that the time for us to get out of that cycle of overreliance on the dependent start bolstering the good work that we've had from the SEAMAP program, from the MARMAP program with broader geographic scope.

And here we are; we've got not SEFIS working in conjunction with those two longer-term programs making some very good progress. I think that is one example of a successful strategy that actually we're reaping the benefits right now.

MR. BOWEN: Bonnie, first of all, I agree with you. When I read through this document it says, "Implement adequate fishery population monitoring programs and collect basic fishery

information;” all that; we’re doing that anyway or should be. But the question I have, and you spoke to it, you said your scientists in a nanosecond would list their priorities or know their priorities. Can you tell me what – I’m not asking you – well, maybe I am asking you to speak for someone else, but can you tell me what maybe their top two or three priorities were in that nanosecond?

DR. PONWITH: Well, it certainly depends in the context and the scope of the way the question is asked; but certainly for here, understanding the genetic makeup of blueline tilefish throughout its geographic range on the eastern seaboard is a pretty darned high priority right now because of the issues that we’ve got.

Understanding the full distribution and densities within that distribution of blueline tilefish is valuable and maybe some social science on blueline tile. That is just a very pinpoint-focused list of things that are germane to things we’re going to be talking about this week that we wouldn’t have to if we had that.

But the way you get that isn’t I need fishery-independent data collections for all the species on the South Atlantic Council’s list. It is not an effective communications approach. Those are just some examples. During one of the breaks, we were talking about one of the recommendations, which I actually do reasonably agree with; and that is for a stock where you are going to do a traditional stock assessment, not some of the more data-limited approaches; that is a benchmark, a first-time benchmark, having more than just a running assumption about the stock structure of that stock would go a long way to making those stock assessment dollars and outcomes be very, very powerful.

What I could see is including in there three or four years before an assessment is intended to be put in queue, go for a MARFIN, an S-K, or a cooperative research project to get some of the baseline genetics done to prepare for that stock assessment. Those are just a couple examples.

MR. BOWEN: To that point; that reiterates to me that we need to have more collaboration between us as a council, the SEDAR team, SEDAR and the Science Center. That should be our priority right there, just by what we’ve talked about; for us to nail down and have more collaboration with the Science Center; priority right there.

DR. McGOVERN: We use this report every year to set the priorities for MARFIN. I agree with what Bonnie has said. We’ve gotten to a situation with MARFIN where we’ve become very generic in all the priorities. There really is a need to come up with the immediate research needs and identify those in MARFIN, and it would be helpful to have it specified here as well. I agree with all this discussion.

MR. HARTIG: Is there anybody I missed? Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Well, I guess if we’re talking about immediate stuff; Bonnie has clearly outlined the issues that we’re having with blueline tilefish right now. That is immediate. I guess where do you draw the line at immediate? Blueline tilefish I think is beyond immediate and sort of into a crisis type of thing right now, which hopefully will bring some necessary resources to deepwater species monitoring and evaluation. But I also think about other priorities that we have on our plate right now such as documentation of spawning activity within our current deep-water

marine protected areas, additional resources to be put to monitoring those deep-water marine protected areas to be able to appropriately measure the benefits that they may be providing.

We are hearing a lot from our constituents right now about things like that; additional efforts for purposes of potentially finding spawning SMZs. Dr. Heyman has been pretty gracious with his time. The council has put some money towards this; Pew has put some money towards this. It is my understanding he is going to be sampling in North Carolina this week.

I think if there is any way we can collaborate on those types of efforts, and those are things that I see as immediate. I wouldn't categorize them as crisis, but they are immediate; but immediacy is fluid. How do we define that?

MR. HARTIG: I don't know.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think if we think about the timing of these things, a MARFIN request, CRP request, RFPs go out in the fall, they would be reviewed in the spring. Money gets done at them I don't know, maybe by the end of the fiscal year or say by the fall. Priorities that you establish now influence RFPs in the fall or early next year; so that is 2016 that lead to projects maybe in 2017 that gets you results in 2018.

We are looking at a pretty long term. In terms of the way you council members have perceived what short term and long term; that is a real long-term viewpoint, because there is going to be a lot of squeaky wheels between now and 2018. I think we do have to somewhat balance that with the reality of the things that face us here and now.

I definitely support the idea. I've been frustrated with what this has become and what happens with it. I totally think we do need to rewrite some of these to make it much easier for someone who is writing priorities for an RFP for a program like S-K, MARFIN, CRP to be able to pull language directly from our recommendations and put it into that and not have to assume or write into it or say, well, they want independent sampling, and they want it for 25 species.

Well, that may give someone an opportunity to write a project that increased the sampling for the 24th of your priorities, not the first. I wonder if perhaps, for example, in the one that is highlighted there in yellow, which addresses the stock structure, so this is a new thing. It reflects your recent recommendation, and it says we want to have stock structure evaluation before doing benchmarks.

Then it goes on to say based on current plans of stock identification conducted for scamp and gray snapper by 2017. Is that a good example of where we say here is the big picture view? This is what we need and here is a specific coming up in the near term that needs to be addressed; so that could be coming so that if someone does stock structure of scamp and gray snapper, that should be clearly a top priority as opposed they want to do stock structure of red hind.

Is this sort of an example of maybe how we could reword this document somewhat to capture the big picture as well as give better guidance on the short term and what our real priorities are. Maybe we come up with 10 or 15 here and now really high-priority projects that are very



specific like that that say we want this for this species, so it could better rise to the top in these competitive grant programs.

DR. PONWITH: I think that is an excellent example, and it is not just the people who are drafting the FFOs, it is also – think about a proposer, think about some really sharp mentor in an academic institution who has a new graduate student looking for a project and they want their proposal to be funded.

If it were me, and it says right here in this document the thing I'm picking to do is their number one priority, because relevance is almost in many cases equal to scientific merit in whether a project gets funded. If it is a beautifully eloquent study on something that is esoteric, it is not going to get funded compared to something that you can actually cite; here, this is number two, or this is number three, or it was one in this year but it hits critical stage the year after.

In terms of the timeframe, I think we do have to be really careful that we're not chasing our tail on this where we put stuff in there and it is overtaken by events. I'm wondering if there is a way to create a timeline to say here is what our draft – and we all know we put draft because things change a lot on the SEDAR schedule in spite of our best efforts; but here is what the draft SEDAR schedule looks like.

Here are things based on the SSC's review of the last assessment said this stock assessment passes, but it would be so much better if we had X. We need to be cannibalizing those sections out of those peer review reports and making sure that the next time that stock comes up in queue we're remembering that need and we're remembering it early enough that it has influence in the following stock assessment.

MR. HAYMANS: I'm not on your committee, but I appreciate the opportunity to comment. I think at least what I hear there are two levels of priorities. One is sort of the ongoing priority as referenced by the number one priority, which are SAFE reports. I've been around five years and I've heard us complain about not getting SAFE reports for five years.

That is a priority; we should be getting SAFE reports on as many species as possible. Then we have those crisis issues that we didn't know existed five years ago like blueline tilefish. If there were some way that you divided this prioritized need such that we got the ongoing things that we need to feed the stock assessments that are always occurring – I guess that is where we were going when we had the discussion in council meeting before last about time spent by stock assessment biologists on other things.

We know we have ongoing stock assessments that have to happen\ and those should be priority but in a different way than blueline tilefish genetic is. We know that is important as well. I know there is frustration on the council's part. I know there is frustration on Bonnie and others' part, but we need to maybe look at a way to split these into different types of priorities.

MR. BELL: Strange mine meld with Doug, apparently. What I was going to say and from what Bonnie was saying is the plan needs to be superimposed on a realistic timetable. Part of that timetable could be a funding cycle thing, and part of it could be based on things that you can do without having to worry about external funding, maybe using assets you have in place.

Part of the timetable would obviously be the SEDAR schedule. But somehow you have to bring the realistic timetable and the plan together, and then it makes sense. But there may be some things that you can address that pop up without having to worry about going out for a grant or something.

It may be things that we can deal with internally, so to speak. But somehow you have to tease those out and these are the things that we can maybe address that way and these are the things that are going to require funding, so they have to match up with the funding cycles and those sorts of things. But those do need to be brought together to make it a realistic plan.

DR. McGOVERN: I agree with Mel; I think they are two different things. I think the SAFE report thing is more an internal thing that can be done by us. John Carmichael, Mike Errigo, myself, Dave Gloeckner and Steve Turner were all working on SAFE report a few years ago, and we had multiple conversations and we were working on this document that would kind of be some kind of virtual document, and it died.

I looked in my e-mail, the last e-mail I had where John and I talked about it was August of 2013. I think that could be done by some kind of like an IPT sort of process where you have council staff, SERO, and the Science Center all working together on a SAFE report for an FMP. It would work like how we develop an amendment. We could maybe do it one FMP at a time and get that done. I think that is separate from where we're talking about things like scamp and gray snapper and the needs for research for those.

DR. PONWITH: To Dr. Duval's original question of give an example of things that feel like they are service agreements as opposed to a research or monitoring priority; that is a classic example because the SAFE report really isn't a research or monitoring other than sort of monitoring the status of the fishery.

Letting that piece go then to Jack's point, it hasn't died; it is still extremely active. I've got Tom Jamir is leading a group within the Southeast Fisheries Science Center studying the National Standard Guidance and pursuing the notion of a virtual SAFE report so we are never in a situation where we've got a paper document that is missing one last field and we have to wait until the data are finalized such and such a month and that holds the whole report hostage; so that by the time the report comes out, the other 75 percent of it is obsolete.

What we want to do is create a virtual document with hyperlinks to those components that meet the National Standard Guidelines for content. What we've discovered is that absolutely everything required to be in a SAFE report is already in the stock assessment reports; but we don't want someone to have to read an 800-page document to find it.

We believe that we can create a system that hyperlinks in those data; and then you select is this something that is only refreshed for each stock assessment or is it something that should be refreshed on an annual basis; select the location of those data, the refresh rate, and assign somebody to that hyperlink and say your job is by this date to refresh this.

The next thing you know you've got this document with all these little blue hyperlinks that is the state of the art, the state of the fishery in its absolute most up-to-date version that is available. We've made progress on that. We are also working on a national team, trying to standardize

this process across the nation. We are not waiting for the national team, which by definition is slow, even slower than us. We're continuing to forge ahead on this.

But that would be an example of getting that stood up and then working among the triumvirate the council staff, the Regional Office, and the Science Center to farm out; okay, this parameter, we will be responsible for it and it will be updated according to the agreed refresh rate. That is the example that Michelle was looking for.

MR. HARTIG: I appreciate that discussion, because I've been thinking that since we haven't gotten SAFE reports, somehow to get them through another venue, somehow some kind of staff relationship where we actually get something to use. I'll just use red grouper as an example. We have to have fishermen come in to tell us that red grouper are in horrible shape before we know what is going on.

We should be able to know every year what is happening in our fishery, what the effort is, what potential causes we have for the decline in landings. These types of things we need to know on an annual basis so we could probably be proactive in some kind of regulations in our fisheries to halt a decline before it gets to the point where we have to get to an assessment where we close the fishery.

DR. PONWITH: But to that point; no matter how up to date our SAFE report is, the fishermen will always know before that SAFE report. They are the experience on the water. They will always know before the data stream is finalized.

DR. DUVAL: I know one of the things we've talked about is potentially looking at getting kind of a state-of-the-fishery report from our advisory panels. Myra, does the Snapper Grouper AP review the research plan? I don't think they do. Myra is shaking her head no. I am thinking of kind of a coordinated approach where we always have our advisory panel meetings in April, and the SSC meeting is usually the last meeting of those April meetings.

But if we can get that sort of status-of-the-fishery type of reports from our advisory panels saying what are some data needs that you all see, what are some issues that you all see; and those can also be brought forward to the SSC in a package for their consideration as they review the research plan.

I'm just trying to think of a way to get those on-the-water observations in sort of an annual type of process that can feed into with the SSC reviews, what we hear reviews, so that we can say you know this is coming up, we're getting a lot of concerns about red grouper. They appear to be in spawning condition up this way; catches are going down.

Fishermen are concerned about the lack of encounter rate, et cetera. We can use those reports to feed into that type of process. That is just a suggestion. Again, I'll just put it out there that I really think it would be helpful to have some Science Center staff at that spring SSC meeting where this is reviewed.

MR. BELL: I was just curious. How do things in the plan get turned into priorities let's say for staff that we have or for assets that we have or programs that we have. For instance, let's say

number five on the list, which was evaluate the effectiveness of current MPAs and other closed areas.

Okay, so we've had these MPAs for a while. That has been something we've been interested in for a while; but how does that need get turned into directing assets or people to work on that like say this year or next year or the year after, or do we actually direct work based on this? How does that work, really, because we do have a great deal of existing assets and people? How do they get directed to do these things? In other words, using number five for an example maybe, how does that happen?

DR. DUVAL: Three words, system management plan; which we will be reviewing. I think that is one tool that could help Bonnie and her staff.

DR. PONWITH: I like that. I'll tell you how it doesn't is if a unilateral plan is developed that creates \$70 million worth of work that all needs to be in 2015; it doesn't happen. The alternative to that is to recognize if a management approach has been taken that has research or monitoring requirements; in my view this is one of the advantages of these meetings to be able to say, gee, sounds like a good idea.

The first two questions are is it enforceable, which is why we are ably represented by law enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard at these meetings. Then the second one is, is there a current data collection program that provides the feedback loop to this or would one have to be created? What happens if that program doesn't exist?

Those discussions I think are really important. Those MPAs exist; they are under-monitored right now. I think having something in the plan that says, okay we have multiple areas that are set aside, and they have multiple objectives; even within those you could create priorities. We really need an answer to this question.

Then by putting that question above all the other questions, it is a leading indicator for me as I'm creating my work plan for the year and a leading indicator for proposers who are looking for extramural funding saying that would be a sweet one to tackle this year as opposed to any of the other ones.

I think just having a plan that actually has sort of a gradient of priorities is a way to make things happen, because that top one may happen and it may happen at the expense of four or five others that are below it; but at least you don't have to hear those words in your plan; well, not really much has been done since 2007. No one wants to read that in a report. That is not a happy outcome.

MR. BELL: I just used that as an example; but I totally get that; so in that particular form that is not particularly useful as far as guiding any specific activities or anything. It is something we want but it is not detailed enough or it is not thought through enough in terms of how are you going to do that? It becomes sort of – I won't say an unfunded mandate, but it becomes an unsupported nice thing that we would really like to have. It doesn't really help you in terms of directing assets.

DR. PONWITH: what it does is if I take that at face value, I will just pull a number off the top of my head. If I had 400 days at sea and maybe \$10 million, I could go out without a priority list and I could do some monitoring; and if I did that every year for five years and I had some control sites to work those against so that I had contrast; I could tackle a question like that.

And because I'm not going to ask for 400 days at sea because the competition for those every single day at sea is a bare knuckles fist fight; then understanding what is the best mechanism for obtaining those data in terms of the data quality and affordability. What are some of our options and how can we work together to try and get some of those data; then that spawns I think innovation.

Let me give you an example. We were talking about days at sea. In Alaska they have this cruise in the Shelikof Straits. It is really hard to get there, expensive, and the weather is horrible all the time. They need those data for one of their most financially important stocks up there that they've got. They are like there has got to be a cheaper way of doing this.

What they would do is it is a midwater species, and they were using hydroacoustics, and they would float the fish over the schools and use algorithms to convert those acoustic data to population indices. They tried something. It's like, well, it sounds hair-brained, but instead of hanging your acoustics off the hull of a ship and cruising over the school, let's take the acoustics and point them up to the sky and mount them on the bottom and wait for the school to go over the instrument.

They did some tests on this, and after testing it for quite a while and running the math on it and doing the simulation modeling; they found by taking three of these instruments and mooring them, and leaving them for a month, and then go collecting them; they have all the data they need for understanding the status of that stock in a long-term index at a fraction of the cost of going out and surveying these sort of mowing the lawn, these transects over this broad area.

That demand created a whole new approach to answering that question, and it has shifted from a research project now to full operations. It is how they are doing it from that point forward. Understanding those priorities and then working together and not just playing hot potato, I've created the priority, it is your problem now; I think creates better yield in terms of actually those outcomes materializing.

MR. HARTIG: All right, this has gone on for quite a while and it is critical discussion. I have mixed feelings on it. To me, if we're going to go do the priorities that are pointed in one specific direction, then we're going to lose sight that we need the data to manage on a day-to-day basis. That is one of the concerns I have.

But if actually after seven years the way we've been doing it hasn't worked, I am willing to change and go to a more focused direction that fits into the grant-funding schedules, and actually gets research done. But I can't ever let go. One day, Bonnie, we're going to come up with a report card for the National Marine Fisheries Service and how that they've been able to do the fishery-dependent sampling in the South Atlantic.

When we get that report card, based on my experience with the assessments, it is not going to be a very good report card. It is pretty good for a couple species, but for most of them it is not very

good. I have been trying to get better data. You say the most important fishery data we need is fishery-independent data. Okay that is fine. We have the SEAMAP survey, which we were able to use in two assessments for king mackerel and Spanish mackerel.

The mathematical gyrations that were used to actually use that data; the first time they looked at it they couldn't use it. Even some of them, it took two assessments before they could use it. That had to be in a size so much to be able to use it with mathematical gyrations; that to me you are getting to a point where it is probably not useable in the first place.

I think we need a priority on what kind of fishery-independent information will be appropriate to use for what species or what stocks. That I think would be extremely valuable information to have, because that is, like you say, the gold standard of research to be able to do for stock assessments.

If we get to that point and we find that some species there is not going to be an economical way to collect that information, then we should be collecting the robust fishery-dependent data on those species to be able to do stock assessments. I think what we really need to do is have in our priority exercise to answer those questions, and I think that would help tremendously in our research plan development. I think this has been a great, great conversation today.

I think we've got – at least I have a direction now that I think we need to go to get to where we need to be. How long that takes we'll see; but I think that this has been very productive. All right, so we have a research plan that we were going to approve. Obviously, we're not going to approve it today. Specifically, how should we move forward?

DR. DUVAL: I think if we could go through the plan as we have it and pull out some of those very specific things that Bonnie has noted that others have noted; that I think are these are our immediate for however way you define that priorities; then I think if perhaps – Bonnie, you provided an example of the SAFE report, like the way it is currently structured within this document; that here is a way it could be made more helpful.

Jack has referred to the fact that he thinks this could be really more of like an agency IPT type of thing with the council, so should we just pull the SAFE report stuff out of this completely? I guess I am asking that as a question. Looking at the document that we have, we do have some fishery-dependent and fishery-independent priorities. Maybe we need to categorize it like that.

Ben, I think you just summarized it quite well; what are the fishery-independent priorities, what are the fishery-dependent priorities, where we're simply not going to have resources at least in the immediate term to tackle those? We already have -- this is on SPANs PDF Page 2 and 3, I think – but this evaluation of the independent survey and biological sampling information available for all South Atlantic managed stocks that are currently unassessed.

This kind of got rolling a while ago; this was I think something of a priority from the SSC. There is another Data Best Management Practices Workshop that is happening next week. That one is in Atlanta. That one is focused on –

MR. CARMICHAEL: SEDAR Data Decisions Process.

DR. DUVAL: But something like this was in the queue for another review. It seems like this type of evaluation would be one of the most important things that we could put out there. It is not a crisis thing, but having this sort of knowing what you know and knowing what you don't know kind of evaluation on the fishery-dependent side and on the fishery-independent side.

I think we can take what we have and probably re-categorize some of these things as fishery independent and fishery dependent. I also think that we could make good on some of these recommendations such as having Science Center staff present at the April meeting where the SSC is reviewing these.

I think we should have someone from the Beaufort Assessment Team and someone from the Miami Assessment Team. A lot of these are so assessment driven; I think that would help make this more of a collaborative document. I'll stop there, I guess.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It sounds like perhaps what you're suggesting is in the vein of lumpers or splitters. We've become even more splitters than we have been. We've done some splitting recently. We should do more splitting; identify those types of general research type things and prioritize them.

I am thinking of the types of projects that are appropriate for cooperative research type things. We're going to have some sort of competitive grant program. They would be more of the short term, this is research you can get in a university person, cooperative with fishermen, et cetera, could answer this question in a relatively short period.

Then we have a lot of these issues that are more of the council asking for more information from the agency in terms of where your fisheries stand, where your data collection stands, what needs to be done; so that could be perhaps a second section or an additional section that gets more into sort of the long-term monitoring needs that the council has identified, because I think people want to hang on to that and not let that slip away.

We have the idea of stock prioritization. That is certainly something we have tried to work on. The agency has a national effort underway. We are sort of in a holding pattern on our efforts over the last two years waiting on the agency to work that out; but as we see in our appendix here that is very important to this overall plan. What are the stocks we want to do what type of assessment at; that is where that number two gets at.

I know that has been a topic of Ben's for many years about what stocks are we going to target these different types of assessments on, and what data is necessary, and how do we get the data to do that. With scant resources, it is critical that we do that so we don't always tend to be so reactive.

I guess that is sort of what I'm sensing is come back in September; I'll write a timing and task motion that basically says bring this back with more separation into long-term, short-term monitoring versus research and maybe pull out as many of the specific things that are there now and put them on the table for this committee to develop a real prioritized list of what you think are types of general research questions to be addressed in the next two years, in the next five years what have you. We try to parse out some of these pieces as much as we can and better characterize them and separate operational stuff from research.

DR. DUVAL: I just have one question or maybe addition to that. The research needs from each one of the SEDARs, it would be appropriate to go back at least to starting at the most recent and kind of working our way back for the different species that have been assessed to see – look at the most recent set of research needs coming out of the assessments for each one of our managed species, putting those in a list and seeing which have been addressed or which haven't been addressed.

I suspect maybe there is probably some good stuff there that we could think about. That might be a little bit of a longer-term project; but if there is a species that is on the priority list for a stock assessment, I think getting those research needs from a previous assessment into our research plan would be good.

I think just in this bolded section that we have right here on issues highlighted for 2015, those are two great, urgent needs; funding to allow reinitiating the long bottom longline sampling that provides us only abundance information. I think the one thing I would throw in there was the SSC did discuss going back and looking at the 2009 fishery-independent data workshop that led to SEFIS, because the longline survey was discussed there, and pull out any recommended improvements. Then evaluation of stock structure and identification, I think those are two high profile things that it would be important to retain.

MR. HARTIG: All right, we don't need a motion, I don't think.

MR. CARMICHAEL: No; we'll get this into timing and tasks.

MR. HARTIG: Some items are going to be longer term than others it seems to me, so timing and tasks will be differential.

MR. CARMICHAEL: There has been an ongoing effort to deal with changes in the MRIP Effort Survey, which you were provided the report of that group, and it essentially lays out a process by which information from the new survey is going to be collected simultaneously with information from the existing survey and an approach for doing the calibration and such efforts which most of us are familiar with.

We've done this a number of times for other changes within the survey; but an approach for getting that done and making sure that you as managers have apples-to-apples and oranges-to-oranges comparisons when you are dealing with catch limits set from the old survey and having to evaluate that as well as new data become available and you can start developing catch limits with the new methods; that you can have the information there and a timeline that tells you at which point we'll need to have that work done.

That at a year in the future when you are dealing with only the new survey existing, you know that you need to have your catch limits and stuff updated to the extent possible and not have to rely on calibrating data and looking back and such as we have so often. In the interest of time, I am not going to say a whole lot of that. You have received the report.

It has been a very collaborative effort from people from many agencies, and several people around the table have taken part in that. It seems like it has been very well received by the



agency. They are certainly investing an awful lot of resources, time as well as a lot of money to conduct this side-by-side that we think is very critical. I am very encouraged by their commitment to do this in the way that these group of people have said is the best way to do it, and they seem to be standing behind it, which is great.

If you had any specific questions, the real expert on all of this is Dave Van Voorhees, and luckily he is here. If you had any real nagging concerns or specific questions about this, Dave would be the guy to ask.

The issue here for us is more that there is going to be a time probably in late 2017 and certainly 2018 we're going to need to be updating many of our stock assessments to use the new information and bring in the revised time series of recreational efforts; so that as we go forward into the future, we have limits based on the new survey and the results from that appropriately adjusted in the past history. We can apply straight values estimated and widely available from the new survey to your evaluation of catches each year.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions about the MRIP transition? The last item before other business is South Atlantic Assessment Priorities.

MR. CARMICHAEL: A couple of things to bring you up on; red grouper in the schedule that you'll see now is pushed back. This was coming out of the Science Center. It was continuing the adjustments based on the delay that we had in red snapper and gray triggerfish. There have been kind of been ongoing changes within FWCC and dealing with timing of black grouper and Goliath grouper; the types of assessments that are going to be conducted and their interest to move those assessments into some of the models, such as stock synthesis, which are more widely in use, because some of those are in a bit older modeling packages.

We've got some updated schedules on those. Then the last part of this is the timing and a list of potential priority stocks that you may want to consider for the initial updates from the MRIP transition, and these were from the transition report. They were for us red snapper, hogfish, black sea bass, gray trigger, blueline tile, red porgy, and gag.

Then, of course, we have scamp and gray snapper coming up on a benchmark, but we need to, as recommended, get the stock structure worked out for those. That gives us the table here which shows the current best estimate of what we have for the priorities with 2016 obviously coming on us very fast and these scheduled within SEDAR now. Then 2017 being the things that this fall, when the Steering Committee meets, we really need to begin solidifying, because the plans need to start coming together for 2017 here this fall.

DR. McGOVERN: I have a question about the blueline tilefish assessment. It is listed as an update in the document. I think we had talked about it previously being a standard. I'm just wondering if we had changed that or what's up.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It has been discussed several ways. The concern with the standard is whether or not the spatial issues, which have been the biggest concern, could be addressed in a standard. I believe the feeling is that they likely could not, because we have stock structure and such things worked out.

Now, if we get into a situation where we know more about stock ID, and it turns out there are multiple stocks, then we would have to change that. Whether or not backing off by, say, leaving out some data is the type of change that would be done through a standard is tough to say. It may very well require a benchmark.

I think that because a lot of the decisions that were made relative to surveys and such were kind of reflecting the spatial concerns and certainly the vast differences in catch rates that were observed between the different spatial areas from north of Hatteras versus south of Hatteras in recent years. I believe that we're in the situation of we could do an update of what we have relatively quickly; but if we're going to get into the real issues, then it is going to require a benchmark.

MR. HARTIG: I think the question I have is the Mid-Atlantic wants to manage blueline tilefish. They want to manage them, fine; but the assessment is the assessment. If they want to assess the stock, do they assess the whole stock through our jurisdiction? I mean, to me it seems like they want to assess the animals that live in their jurisdiction.

That is a scientific decision on what animals live where. I don't know how this is all going to shake out as we go through this process of science versus politics in blueline tile. I guess we'll have to wait and see. Michelle says we'll talk about it tomorrow. Do you have something on that, Bonnie?

DR. PONWITH: Cycling back to the schedule; we've got red grouper currently listed in 2016. That was a really good plan until the delay of red snapper. Now it is causing a bit of a stock assessment jam. We've talked about this at the last couple of meetings. I know that we've even had calls from SEDAR staff to actually get it schedule and start filling out the schedule; but I think we're going to have to revisit that red grouper update assessment. Again, it is impacted by the horsepower that we've had to shift into this year for the red snapper assessment.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Red grouper potentially being later than January 2017 for delivery?

DR. PONWITH: 2017; no, that is good.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That is a change that I highlighted. It used to say January 2016.

DR. PONWITH: Right, I looked at that and I'm like, okay, that's good.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The request was to try and get 2015 data. Now you notice in the terms of reference it said through 2014, because there were concerns about meeting the schedule and getting 2015 data; but I think our understanding is that when it gets to the finer scale and we figure out what data are needed and when they could have it; they will use the most up-to-date they have, but at least through 2014. But if they could get 2015, they would attempt to and still make the delivery date.

MR. HARTIG: Any other questions of John about the schedule as currently projected? Seeing none; is there any other business to come before the SEDAR Committee? Seeing none; the SEDAR Committee is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 o'clock p.m., June 8, 2015.)

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Signature

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Date

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**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council -  
June 2015 Council Meeting  
Key West, FL**

**Date: Monday, June 8, 2015      Committee: SEDAR**

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4055 Faber Place Drive, Suit 201  
Charleston, SC 29405**





**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council –  
June 2015 Council Meeting  
Key West, FL**

**Date: Monday, June 8, 2015      Committee: SEDAR**

**PLEASE SIGN IN -**

*In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.*

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(Check box if information is on file)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
ANDERS HOLM	<input type="checkbox"/> On File  SMOKE HOUSE @ FOTMAIL. COM	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Bradford Whipple	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Missy Stokke	<input type="checkbox"/> On File  mstokke@cfl.rr.com	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Gunnar Gudjonsson	<input type="checkbox"/> On File  rstokke@cfl.rr.com	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Ron Stokke	<input type="checkbox"/> On File  rstokke@cfl.rr.com	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe
Joe Klostermann  Gale Klostermann	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Describe

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Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(Check box if information is on file)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Lara clarke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
James Morley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

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# Registration Report

# GoToWebinar

Generated

Jun 17, 2015 9:39 AM EDT

## General Information

Webinar Name  
SAFMC Council Meeting - Day 1 of 5 (Monday)  
Scheduled Start Date  
Jun 8, 2015  
Scheduled Start Time  
8:30 AM EDT  
Scheduled Duration (minutes)

Webinar ID  
119-747-595  
Registered

Opened Invitation

33

56

Clicked Registration Link

63

## Registrants

First Name	Last Name	Email
David	Wyanski	wyanskid@dnr.sc.gov
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Stephen	holiman	stephen.holiman@noaa.gov
roy	crabtree	roy.crabtree@noaa.gov
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mary	vara	mary.vara@noaa.gov
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Rusty	Hudson	DSF2009@aol.com