

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SEDAR COMMITTEE

**Bahia Mar Doubletree by Hilton
Fort Lauderdale, Florida**

June 11, 2018

SUMMARY MINUTES

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Lt. Warren Fair
Erika Burgess
Nik Mehta
Steve Murphey
Karen Raine
Rick DeVictor

Dr. Clay Porch
Dale Diaz
Dr. Jack McGovern
Dr. Jessica Stephen
Karla Gore
Dr. George Sedberry
Dr. Erik Williams

Other observers and participants attached.

The SEDAR Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Bahia Mar Doubletree by Hilton, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Monday afternoon, June 11, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman Charlie Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Charlie, the first bit of open business is requesting approvals for terms of reference and schedules for cobia and yellowtail snapper. I think, at this time, if we want to have George provide the SSC comments.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. George is going to come to the table.

DR. SEDBERRY: The SSC reviewed the terms of reference, the schedule, and the assigned SSC representatives for SEDAR 58 and SEDAR 64, and it has approved those terms of reference and the SSC representatives participating in those SEDARs, and that's pretty much it.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. What next? Is there any discussion?

DR. DUVAL: Trust me to prolong your meeting for you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of cobia, the Data Workshop Term of Reference Number 7, which was to provide recommendations for future research in areas such as sampling, fishery monitoring, stock assessment, et cetera, and there was an addition that was made to that term of reference at the request of North Carolina during the May Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting to also provide recommendations for methods to improve precision estimates of uncertainty in recreational landings.

I didn't know -- Based on some of the conversations that the SSC had about the ABC control rule modifications with regard to use of a constant ABC or phase-in or level of risk, if we wanted to consider adding anything in the terms of reference in that regard. Now, I understand that the ABC Control Rule Amendment is probably unlikely to be completed and in place prior to SEDAR 58 being completed, but I just didn't know if it might not be useful to start considering adding some of those things into our terms of reference at this point, to be thinking about those down the road, and so that's one point.

Then the other point is that, when I was reading through these, I would like to see a term of reference like the one for the Yellowtail Snapper Data Workshop Term of Reference 7 added to cobia. If you look at the terms of reference for yellowtail snapper, and I'm trying to get there, but Data Workshop Term of Reference Number 7, where it says identify and describe ecosystem, climate, species interactions, habitat considerations, and/or episodic events that would be reasonably expected to affect population dynamics, and I think clearly cobia is a species where climate species interactions are -- Well, climate particularly is going to impact the species distribution, and so I thought it might be helpful to include that as a term of reference for the data workshop for SEDAR 58, so that those types of discussions can occur. It doesn't mean that there is necessarily going to be some quantitative incorporation of that type of information, and I recognize that, but I think we would be remiss if we didn't include that as a term of reference for some discussion, and so it's just something to throw out there for the committee to consider.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Those are some good points. Is there further discussion?

DR. DUVAL: I guess the other -- I also really like Term of Reference Number 8 for the yellowtail data workshop, which was also to incorporate socioeconomic information into considerations of environmental events that affect stock status and related fishing effort and catch levels, as practicable, and I did have a little bit of a question about it. I like the idea of consideration of socioeconomic information into considerations of environmental events, and my -- I will hold off, because that's really specific to yellowtail, in terms of what that is. I will leave it at that for now. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am not on the committee, but, in the data workshop terms of reference for cobia, under Number 4, Bullet Number 6, which is technically on page 2, recommend which data sources are considered adequate and reliable for use in assessment modeling, could we also add "and why" to that?

DR. DUVAL: Which term of reference, Jessica?

MS. MCCAWLEY: In cobia, and this is why they're not recommended for use, and this is Number 4, which is provide measures of population abundance that are appropriate for stock assessment, but go all the way to the next page, which is actually Bullet Number 6, and they are not numbered, and so it's recommend which data sources are considered adequate and reliable for use in assessment modeling, and so I'm asking, if it's not recommended, please document why.

MR. PHILLIPS: Other thoughts?

DR. DUVAL: I would be willing to make a motion to that effect, to add the Yellowtail Data Workshop Term of Reference 7 to the cobia data workshop and indicate why with regard to Cobia Data Workshop Term of Reference 7, Bullet 6. It's Term of Reference 4. It should say "4" up there. Sorry.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Michelle, how about the Yellowtail 8? Did you want to add that as well?

DR. DUVAL: I think I had a question about it first. I mean, I like the term of reference, and I was wondering if that is meant to incorporate some of the SSC's recommendations with regard to social and economic considerations in terms of risk tolerance, because there has been a lot of conversation at the SSC, when looking at the ABC control rule, about scientific uncertainty versus risk tolerance and the division between those two and the overlap between those two, and I guess what I am trying to understand is does that mean trying to account for or detail any metadata that we have on what effort shifts might have occurred due to environmental events and how that has -- The types of impacts that has had on the social and economic character of communities or the reverse, that these changes -- I am not speaking very clearly. That these changes, that these environmental events, have had social and economic changes in fishing communities that have been impacted and how the stock is being prosecuted, how the fishery is being prosecuted. I am just looking for a little clarification on the term of reference, but I would love to see it added to cobia.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I am not real familiar on that. As I read it, I don't think it would get to the risk factors that were discussed at the SSC as much, because this is talking about stock status and fishing effort, and so it may end up a little bit different than what the SSC talked about with considering the risk factors, which I assume the SSC will do once the assessment is done and they have this information. Whether or not it leads to overturning any data and identifying any

socioeconomic stuff, I don't know. I think that's one thing we understand, going into these two in particular, that there may not be a lot of information available to even be considered, but it's certainly worth looking for.

DR. DUVAL: Then I guess I would like to add that term of reference to the cobia terms of reference as well for the data workshop, understanding that there may not be a lot of information out there. I think, just in the overall suite of information that there is, that might be helpful to understanding fishery and stock dynamics.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. We have a motion by Michelle and a second by Ben. Is there discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: Do you want me to read that in?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and can you read it in, John?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Add the Yellowtail Snapper DW TOR 7 and 8 to the Cobia DW and add "and indicate why" to Cobia DW TOR 4, Bullet 6 and approve the TORs for cobia as modified.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

MR. CARMICHAEL: While we're on TORs, is there any discussion on the yellowtail terms of reference?

DR. DUVAL: I would be willing to make a motion to approve the TORs for yellowtail snapper, SEDAR --

MS. MCCAWLEY: I had a question on the yellowtail item. I am confused a little bit as to whether the MRIP recalibrated landings are going to be used in there or not.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think, given the timing of this, it should be using the MRIP recalibrated landings. That's the intention.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I hope so. I thought I recollected Luiz Barbieri stating that they were going to move forward without them, and so that's why I wanted to clarify.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I am just going to catch the schedule here and see when we're talking about. We're talking about data workshop in 2019, and so I think, at one point, this was going to happen a little earlier, and they were considering getting started with the prelim data, and it looks like now they will be good to have the final data.

MR. HARTIG: Second.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. Any discussion, after our second by Ben? **Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: The other two are the schedules. You could make one motion to approve both, if you so chose, and we'll see if there's any discussion. They are pretty straightforward and very similar to other SEDAR projects that you have seen many times before. Cobia will get started later this year, and it too will have the benefit of the fully revised and calibrated MRIP data, and we'll wrap up about a year from now, with the review in late summer of 2019, and then yellowtail snapper is getting started early next year, and we're looking at having the review, as I recall, kind of a little bit later, and so it's September of 2019 for the review. Hopefully both of these will be ready to go to the SSC in October of 2019.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, John. Michelle, would you like to make that motion?

DR. DUVAL: **Yes, sir, I sure would.**

MR. PHILLIPS: I've got a second by Mel.

MR. CARMICHAEL: **The motion is, move to approve the schedules for SEDAR 58 and 64.**

MR. PHILLIPS: Any further discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: That handles the approvals.

MR. PHILLIPS: Is there any other -- Are we down to Other Business or where, John?

MR. CARMICHAEL: We are. We are down to the SEDAR project updates. It's a pretty long document, and so I'm not going to go into the entire thing, but it's Tab 3, Attachment A3. It's a summary, project-by-project, of what's been completed and what is underway and where things stand.

One thing I will highlight is the MRIP revision information and getting the revised data, and so the plan still stands that the MRIP program will have the revised and calibrated information available based on the new approach on July 1. They should have that information out there, and, at that point, they will begin making the tools available to the Science Center to prepare that data for use in stock assessments.

There is a couple of steps that the Science Center is going to have to take once they get the information from MRIP. One is to adjust the weight estimation approach, which we're familiar with, and then there's another adjustment for changes in how charter boats were sampled in the initiation of the charter boat survey that they do a calibration for as well, and so that has led to some changes in when the data will actually be available to all the different projects. It was addressed in the SEDAR Steering Committee report, and the new Southeast Center Director, Dr. Clay Porch, provided us an update at the Steering Committee on when his folks think they can have that information available.

What SEDAR staff is now looking at is the next step, and this will happen later this month, and that is to then revise the project schedules accordingly, and so we know that our greater amberjack and red porgy assessments will both get pushed back a little bit to account for the additional delay in getting this information, and we even, at the Steering Committee, the South Atlantic, agreed to let greater amberjack take a backseat a little bit to a Gulf assessment, in terms of priorities, because

we have workshops already scheduled and hotel locations, and so greater amberjack might get pushed back a little bit more than what we had initially thought last time we spoke.

Then the other part of this, of course, is what we're calling the revision assessments, and so those stocks which were recently assessed, black sea bass and red grouper and vermilion snapper. They are going to be updated with the new information, and that will then be used by the SSC to set the ABC recommendations. To add to that, we also know that the SSC looked at interim analyses on red snapper, which we'll talk about more, and the thought is that will need to be updated too in order to support new ABCs for future years as well.

What we're looking for in the priorities is that these revision assessments -- Because you know we have the rebuilding plan on red grouper that needs to be updated, and we need to get the ABCs for black sea bass and vermilion snapper, and those are going to be the priorities. We're going to get the revisions out of the way, and, if all goes according to plan and MRIP comes through on their end and there is no major hiccups within the Science Center applying their follow-up evaluations and calibrations, we should be on track that those revision assessments can go to the SSC in October, in which case they can then give us the information we need on red grouper, black sea bass, and vermilion snapper, and we'll have the revised information we need, and there is a fourth one in there that is escaping me for some reason for our revisions, but it will come to me at some point. That is probably the biggest information on the schedules and projects update.

DR. DUVAL: John, in the summary in Attachment 4 for the SEDAR Steering Committee, under SEDAR Projects, the first bullet says the scamp leadership group call will be canceled if there is no recommended change in the stock ID, and is that cobia maybe, instead of scamp?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, that would be cobia.

DR. DUVAL: Okay, and then I think the only other question I had, and maybe this is a question for Dr. Porch, is, in terms of the adjustments that are applied, I think in regard to the MRIP numbers, and I have brought this up a few times in the past, that MRIP has one method for weight estimation and the Science Center has another method for weight estimation that is likely more robust, and this has come up in other venues, at ASMFC, with regard to tracking of cobia, and so I am wondering if you can give us any update.

I know that people have been extremely busy with trying to get the new MRIP estimates out there and meet that July 1 deadline, but when there would be some resolution to sort of these two competing versions of best scientific information available, just because it's confusing for the public when they go to the MRIP website and do a query and you get one set of numbers and then we have another set of numbers here, and so I guess any light at the end of the tunnel that you can provide us in terms of that would be appreciated.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. There definitely is light at the end of the tunnel. The MRIP folks are going to start taking over that responsibility. They have had a review of all the calibrations, and they have been working on how they come up with the weights. One of the issues that they had before is sometimes they were computing weights when you had only a few samples taken, and so there is extremely high variance associated with that, whereas we were using a sort of averaging across strata, depending on how many observations were in adjacent strata, and so it might be different time periods or different areas, depending on where the observations are.

In any case, they have been looking at a more appropriate way of pooling observations, when necessary. At the same time, in many of the cells, they are getting more observations, and so they should have more robust weight estimates, and the idea is exactly to use the same information in the stock assessments as would be available on the website, and they are planning to roll that out shortly after that July date.

DR. DUVAL: Awesome. Thank you. That's some of the best information that I've heard in a while. I appreciate it.

MR. PHILLIPS: Anything else, John? Go ahead, George.

DR. SEDBERRY: This is SSC comments on the future assessment activities. The SSC supports future assessment priorities for 2020 to 2022 and encourages, for red snapper, that the delay between the terminal year and the assessment completion should be minimized, which would be good for everything, and then, as a recommendation for first-time assessments or benchmarks, in 2023, the SSC recommends looking at knobbed porgy or a porgy complex, vermilion snapper, blueline tilefish, and species that are in the chevron traps and the chevron trap video survey that have not been assessed. That's it for the SSC comments.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, George. Any other comments?

MR. CARMICHAEL: That wraps up the stuff on the projects, and I have a few comments on the Steering Committee, and that would be next. I will go into that. The Steering Committee met in mid-May, and a big part of the discussion was the research track, and so the Steering Committee has supported moving ahead with that, really with the overall comprehensive approach, which will be familiar to you guys, of research track and operational assessments as well as the key stocks and interim analysis.

A quick reminder is the key stocks plan is something we've talked about with our SSC and presented to you a couple of times of identifying those stocks which are most influential in the fishery and trying to keep timely and up-to-date information on them, and so that's going to become part of the overall SEDAR planning, and then it will still be between each individual cooperator and council and the Science Center, in terms of working out details of those interim analyses and timing and which stocks they consider key, but it was pretty encouraging for the SEDAR Steering Committee to agree to that approach, and really the underlying intent of all of that is to get us more timely information on as many stocks as we can and focus on those stocks which are most important to the fishery.

While we manage many stocks, and it looks like we've only assessed a handful relative to how many we manage, the truth is that we have assessed 80 percent of our snapper grouper fishery. We have assessed the bulk of our CMP, because we have assessed king, and we have assessed Spanish, and so we have really assessed, in terms of poundage, a lot of our fishery. The one area that is of concern, of course, is dolphin, and we have been, a number of times, working with the Center, and I think they're working on other avenues to figure out how we can go about and get dolphin, such a widespread stock, assessed, but that may prove to be beyond SEDAR, as has been reported so far. The idea of key stocks is to keep timely information on those species that we have done, and so I think it's a big step having the Steering Committee move in that direction.

Another pretty significant change is we always talk about the schedule, and there is a lot of discussion of the data bottlenecks. I think Clay really helped shed some light on just how challenging that is for the Center. They are hoping to add some more staff and continuing to work to streamline the data processing aspect and dealing with this MRIP, as we just discussed, would be one less thing off the data processors' plates, which would be a big help.

One of the things the Steering Committee will probably be doing in the future is considering the overall amount of data processing time which is available to support the different SEDAR projects, and so the research track and the operational assessments in the future, and have a certain data load, and Clay has only so much data load that he can carry, and that's going to become something that the Steering Committee has to consider across the board, in terms of setting the schedule, and so you just may see that in the future come up as maybe a compromise we have to make or we have to ask you for some guidance to go back to the Steering Committee, in terms of making sure that we keep that data load at a manageable level.

All in all, it was, I think, a very good meeting, and we're looking at another meeting coming up in the fall, possibly over webinar, depending on items that come up. We used to always meet in person in the fall, and we moved that to the spring. It's good, because things get busy in October, and, also, we want to try to start planning a little bit more in advance, plus we wanted to welcome our new Center Director, and so that's the SEDAR Committee, in a nutshell.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, John, and I agree. I was at the Steering Committee, and it was very good, and it was very informative, and we're all looking forward to working with Clay and just seeing just what we actually can get done. Any other thoughts or comments?

MR. HARTIG: What did you say about scamp? I was drifting off. Not sleeping, but I was thinking about something else, but what did you guys determine in the SEDAR Committee -- You said you had a lot of conversation about the research track, and so what was that final determination?

MR. CARMICHAEL: We're going to do scamp as the research track, yes, and we're going to do a couple of things. We're going to convene a planning group for scamp, kind of a little different than what we've done, but we want to try and not be so formulaic and prescriptive in terms of our terms of reference and schedules that we have now, and it really comes to the SEDAR coordinators to try and make all that work out, but to get more of a voice from the analysts and the SSC and the council staff, in terms of what the assessment needs, because research tracks are likely to be quite a bit different from each other than benchmarks have been in the past.

Then we're also looking at a consistent group of decision-making people moving through the data workshop and the assessment workshop, and so we will still have all the same people we have at the data workshop, but we will identify a core that is really going to be the decision-makers that will consider all the information, and hopefully that's going to alleviate some of this thing where the assessment workshop people oftentimes feel bound by the data workshop decisions, and we see this most often in things like indices, where the data workshop's goal is to consider everything which may be good science and viable and then put it all on the table.

Then, in the assessment, sometimes they may conflict with each other, and that's just a great example of where then the assessment people can feel like, well, the data workshop said all these were good and we've got to figure out some way to work them and to deal with it, versus they might really look at it and say, well, maybe this particularly survey doesn't seem to be informative about stock abundance, because they're kind of asking different questions, and so we're hoping this sort of consistent group moving through will help, and it's really pulling a page out of the Northeast. That's very much how they handle their things. They have this consistent set of decision-makers, and we hope that will add some consistency too to the process, and so, yes, I'm pretty excited. I think the research track is going to be very interesting, running through this first one.

MR. PHILLIPS: Any other thoughts or comments? Is there any other business? With no more business, we will end one minute after our allotted time.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 11, 2018.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
July 18, 2018

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June Council Mtg Day 1 6/11/18

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Mandatory Public Sign In 6/11/18

Name	Last	Email	Address	How do you participate in fisheries in the South Atlantic?				If Other, please provide more information:
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Lora	Clarke						NGO	
Art	Sapp	artsapp@hotmail.com	2270 ne 25th street LHP FL 33064	Private Recreational Angler	Charter/Headboat/For-Hire	Commercial Fisherman		
Kelie	Ralston			Private Recreational Angler			NGO	