

**FINAL**  
**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**SEDAR COMMITTEE**  
**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
**September 17, 2024**

The Committee approved the minutes from the March 2024 meeting and the agenda for the September 2024 meeting.

**SEDAR Steering Committee Update**

Council staff provided an update on discussions at the March, July, and August 2025 SEDAR Steering Committee meetings, which centered on revising the SEDAR process by eliminating the Research Track and Operational Assessments nomenclature. If the new approach is approved by the SEDAR Steering Committee, assessments will be structured around project components such as data workshops, topical working groups, assessment workshops, or review workshops, each of which has the potential to impact the assessment timeline.

**SEDAR Process Changes and Identifying Key Stocks**

Council staff presented on past and future potential changes to the SEDAR process and the number of stock assessments that could be completed. The Committee discussed the idea of Key Stocks, acknowledging the limited number of assessments that can be completed in a year. A proposed SEFSC schedule included 14 stocks being assessed every 6 years, with an update model completed around year 3. The Council expressed the following considerations for the revised process:

- Have a fixed schedule for assessments would be beneficial
- Need the flexibility to address emerging issues
- Include Gray Triggerfish as a potential Key Stock given their recent importance
- Consider longer intervals between assessments and possibly alternate assessment approaches for stable stocks.
- Consider switching some stocks with age-based assessments to a more rapid assessment type.
- Allow flexibility to change Key Stocks as importance evolves.

The SEDAR Committee will further discuss SEDAR process changes and priorities in December after the SSC has reviewed the proposed process and developed their recommendations.

**2026 Stock Assessment for South Atlantic Region**

Council staff presented on the 2026 stock assessments for species managed by the Council. Gag and Red Grouper will begin in 2026, and Red Snapper will continue with two time slots. King Mackerel and Snowy Grouper, originally slated for 2026, were rescheduled for 2027. Similarly, Black Sea Bass, initially under consideration for 2026, was also postponed to 2027. The Council did not propose any modifications to the assessment schedule for 2027 and 2028.

**Other Business**

Council staff were notified by Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission that SEDAR 95 Atlantic Stock of Cobia has been delayed due to the lead analyst leaving NMFS. ASMFC staff indicated the ASFMC would like to have the assessment be completed as quickly as possible and

SAFMC staff indicated that a delay in the assessment would result in downstream impacts on South Atlantic assessments. The SEFSC indicated the assessment cannot be completed within the current timeframe.

**Timing and Tasks:**

**MOTION: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:**

- Provide information on life history to help determine which stocks should be considered for Key Stocks.
- Request that the SSC review the proposed SEDAR process changes and provide input on the proposed changes, key stocks and intervals between assessments for committee consideration in December 2024
- Request that the SSC provide guidance on stocks that could be adequately managed using alternatives to intensive aged-based stock assessments. The SSC should consider both assessed and unassessed stocks, may consider this as part of the unassessed stocks effort, and may consider a working group to address this request.

**APPROVED BY COUNCIL**