



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 203
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405
TEL 843/571-4366 FAX 843/769-4520
Toll Free: (866) SAFMC-10

E-mail: safmc@safmc.net

Web site: www.safmc.net

David M. Cupka, Chairman
Ben Hartig, Vice-Chairman

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director
Gregg T. Waugh, Deputy Executive Director

SEDAR COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

September 16, 2013

PORTIONS CLOSED SESSION

Items to be addressed at this meeting: (1) SEDAR activities update, (2) SAFMC assessment planning, (3) SEDAR Steering Committee recommendations, and (4) SEDAR administrative approvals.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee last met June 2013.

3. SEDAR ACTIVITIES

Attachment 1 provides an overview of SEDAR projects.

SEDAR 32, addressing blueline tilefish and gray triggerfish, is underway. The Council was notified in June 2013 of the need to delay gray triggerfish while the analysts investigate possible data mismatch issues. The Council agreed to accept a desk review of gray triggerfish and review by the SSC in April 2014. Further delays of gray triggerfish are now expected. The SEDAR 32 assessment panel reviewed analyses of potential ageing issues on a webinar held August 14 and recommended a halt on further assessment activities until the ageing issues are resolved. It is unknown at this writing how long that will take or what it will require, but the desk review scheduled for February 2014 will not be feasible. The SEFSC will provide an update on the gray triggerfish data and analytical issues at this meeting, to brief the Council on the latest developments.

The SEDAR 32 Data Workshop was held in February 2013. The Review Workshop addressing blueline tilefish was held August 2013 and the assessment will be reviewed by the SSC in October 2013 with recommendations provided to the Council in December 2013.

SEDAR 36, a standard assessment addressing snowy grouper, is underway. The report will be provided to the SSC for review in October and recommendations available to the Council in December 2013.

The FL FWCC is completing an assessment of mutton snapper. It will be reviewed by the SSC in October and recommendations will be provided to the Council in December.

FL FWCC is also working on an assessment of hogfish. Completion is scheduled for January 2014, and review by the SSC in April 2014.

ACTION: As necessary

4. SAFMC ASSESSMENT PLANNING AND PRIORITIES

Determining assessment priorities is one of the primary tasks addressed by this Committee as it prepares recommendations for consideration by the Steering Committee. Early in SEDAR development the Steering Committee proposed setting long-term assessment plans, up to 5 years in advance. However, in recent years the Steering Committee has been forced to work within a much shorter planning window as it responded to changes in the federal management program, such as reauthorization of the MSA, and Council requests drive by management and population changes in important stocks. One of the consequences of this short-term planning perspective is that some stocks that were once priorities have yet to be assessed, and some assessed stocks are becoming out of date.

The Committee is asked to consider long-term assessment priorities and a comprehensive strategy to ensure existing assessments are kept up to date. Staff prepared a working document, provided as Attachment 2, that proposes several strategies for managing the available assessment resources.

The goal of the alternatives in Attachment 2 is to assess as much of the fishery, measured by the percentage of landed pounds attributed to assessed stocks, as possible given the current assessment resources. The Committee is also asked to consider how many additional stock assessments are necessary in the future to support its management needs and obligations. Identifying the overall level of need will enable estimation of the resources necessary to address those needs.

ACTION

- Consider long term assessment strategies
- Identify additional future assessment needs

5. STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Steering Committee will meet October 1-2, 2013, in Charleston SC. Discussion topics will include the SEDAR process and stock assessment project scheduling.

SEDAR SCHEDULING

The SEFSC has indicated that up to 5 assessments may be scheduled for the South Atlantic in a year. However, as shown in Table 1, only 4 slots are available to the South Atlantic in 2013 and 3 in 2014. This is due to resources being devoted to Gulf and Atlantic Menhaden in those years, and an allowance for additional analysts assigned to red snapper in 2014. Given the realities of the last several years, the Council should not expect to receive more than 4 assessment slots in 2015 and beyond, with an additional 5th stock assessment provided in those years when FWC is able to provide an assessment.

The SSC reviewed assessment priorities for 2015 and beyond (Table 2). As usual, there are more assessments desired for 2015 and 2016 than can be accommodated with expected resources. The SSC recommended prioritizing a scamp benchmark over a tilefish update in 2015. No prioritization was provided by the SSC for 2016. An alternative prioritization schedule is

provided, based on Alternative 1 in the assessment prioritization document (Attachment 2). This alternative devotes the available assessment resources to keeping existing assessments up to date, while the priorities reviewed by the SSC devote more resources to assessments of new stocks.

Table 1. South Atlantic assessment projects, 2013-2014. Years in parentheses next to stocks indicate the terminal data year of the most recent prior assessment.

Year	Stocks
2013	1.Gray triggerfish B 2. Blueline Tile B 3. Snowy STD (2003) 4.Black Sea Bass U (2010) (Completed) FL FWC 1: Hogfish B
2014	1. Red Snapper B (2009) 2. Red porgy B (2011) 3. Gag U (2005) FL FWC: Black Grouper U (2008)

Table 2. Potential assessment priorities for 2015 and 2016, based on the SSC review and the prioritization proposal provided for consideration at this meeting.

Year	SSC Review, April 2013	SAFMC Draft Prioritization Document (Attachment 2)
2015	1. Gray Snapper B (new) 2. Dolphin B (new) 3. Wahoo B (new) 4. Scamp B (new) OTHERS: red grouper U (2008) vermillion snapper U (2011) greater amberjack U (2006)	1. Scamp B (new) 2. Red Grouper U (2008) 3. Tilefish U (2010) 4. Greater amberjack U (2006)
2016	white grunt B (new) speckled hind B (new) Warsaw grouper B (new) wreckfish B (new) red snapper U (2013) snowy grouper U (2012) blueline tilefish U (2012)	1. Black sea bass U (2012) 2. Spanish mackerel U (2011) 3. Dolphin B 4. Vermilion snapper U (2011)
2017	red porgy U (2013) black sea bass U (2012) gag U (2013)	cobia U (2011) blueline tilefish U (2012) gray triggerfish B (new) white grunt B (new)

ACTION:

- Identify assessment priorities for 2015.
- Identify assessment priorities for 2016 and beyond.

SEDAR PROCESS

The SEDAR Steering Committee will discuss the approach used by SEDAR to develop stock assessments. Two areas of concern expected to be addressed are (1) reducing data delays and (2) the webinar-oriented assessment workshop process.

One method for reducing data delays that has been discussed by the Steering Committee and various workshop participants is devoting a procedures workshop to developing a best practices document addressing common data issues and their solutions. This would provide greater consistency in data treatments and allow workshop participants to focus their discussions on the unique aspects of each stock.

SEDAR has tried various approaches to efficiently develop stock assessments through an open workshop process. Initial assessments were developed through workshops, which proved both costly and time limited. The current approach uses a series of 6 - 15 webinars, scheduled over 2-4 months. While this saves travel expenses and allows more time for model development, it has failed to improve efficiency and overall discussion and participation has declined over time. The Steering Committee will be asked to consider modification of the AW process. In doing so, the dynamic process of model development, prone to unexpected challenges and resistant to *a priori* planning, will have to be balanced against the SEDAR ideals of providing an open and transparent process. One model that will be proposed for dealing with these challenges is the IPT approach used by the Councils to develop FMPs and amendments.

The Committee is asked to consider these topics in general terms and provide guidance for the Steering Committee representatives.

ACTION:

- Provide guidance on SEDAR procedural issues as discussed here or otherwise identified by the Committee.

6. SEDAR Approvals

When appointing participants to SEDAR 38, king mackerel, in June 2013, the Committee noted a lack of recreational sector representation among the AP candidates. Committee members agreed to make an effort between June and this meeting to identify recreational fishermen who are interested in serving on the SEDAR 28 data workshop panel. Any candidates identified for consideration will be listed in Attachment 3, to be provided at the meeting.

ACTION:

- SEDAR 38 appointments (closed session)

7. OTHER BUSINESS

8. ADJOURN