SSC Reports
December 2018 SAFMC Meeting

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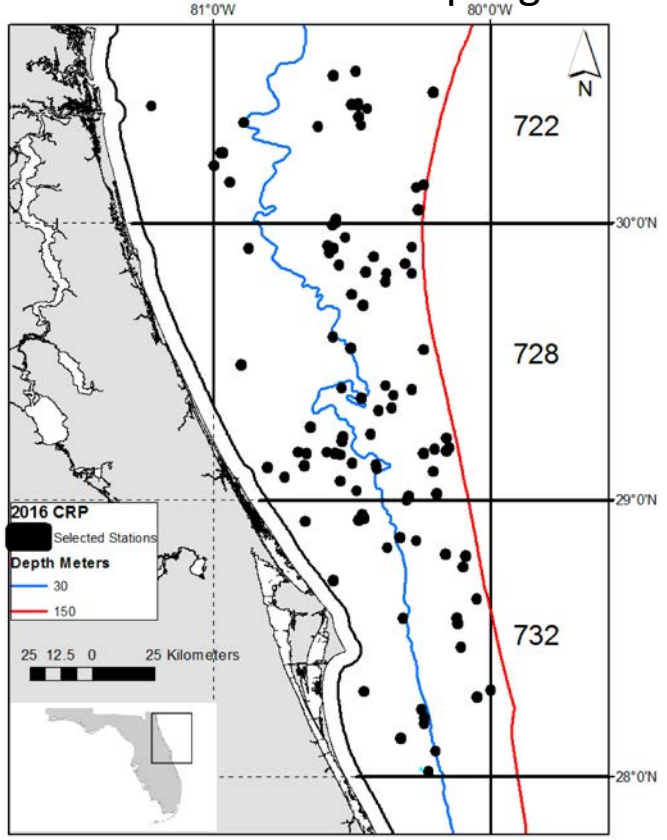
Report of SSC meeting
October 15-17, 2018

Review of Florida FWRI Study

First assessment of the relative size-selectivity of hook and line, chevron traps, and underwater cameras.

- SSC only reviewed the Red Snapper portion of report
- Well-designed, well executed study with valid analyses of relative selectivities between gears
- Assumed that stereo camera system captures the true population

Central Florida Sampling



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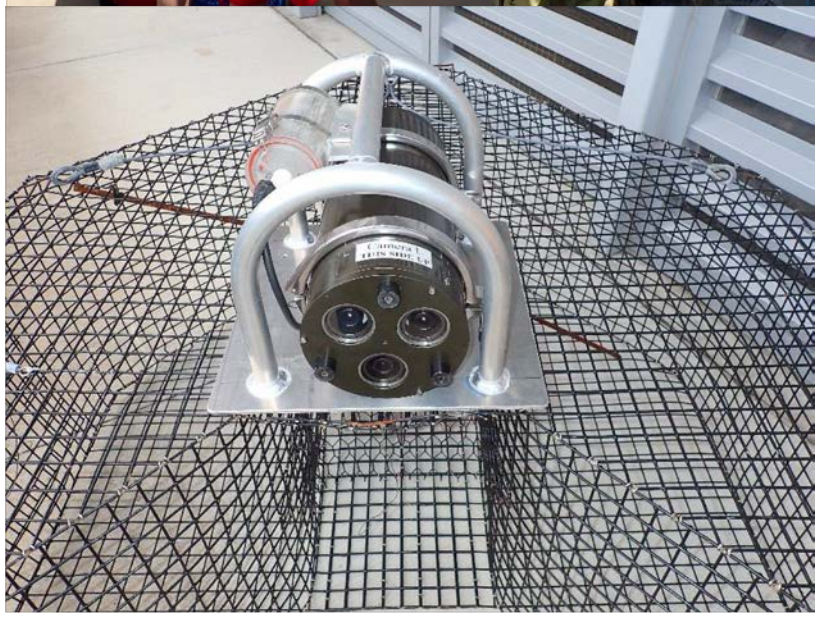
Review of Florida FWRI Study



Study findings

- Traps and videos may have different size selectivities
- Chevron trap selectivity may not be flat-topped
- Extent of doming cannot be determined presently

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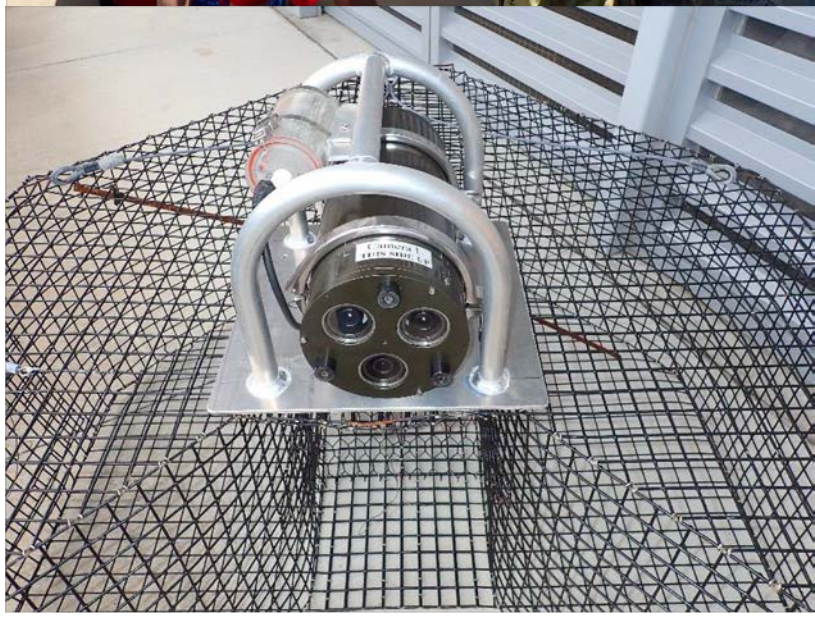
Review of Florida FWRI Study

Uncertainties

- Relative study; “true” selectivities unknown
- Study restricted temporally and spatially
- Effect of camera set-up on catchability unknown
- Video survey provided information on size selectivity, not age selectivity
  - Possible to convert video size data to age data, but this introduces additional uncertainty, especially given fast early growth rate of Red Snapper



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Review of Florida FWRI Study
SSC Recommendations for Additional Research

- Continue selectivity studies, in particular to address true selectivity
- Investigate age selectivity of different gears
- Address temporal and spatial issues
  - E.g., inshore/offshore differences in length distributions
  - Areas outside of Florida
- Results should be considered in upcoming assessments for Red Snapper
- Review study for use in other species

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Review of Florida FWRI Study
SSC Recommendations Regarding the Interim Analysis

- The SSC does not recommend including these findings in the IA at this time
  - IA is based on benchmark assessment
    - Any change would have to be incorporated into the assessment before inclusion in IA
- Standard assessment should be conducted to address selectivity issue

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Review of Florida FWRI Study
SSC Recommendations Regarding the Interim Analysis

- As the Interim Analysis is SSC's preferred method for setting current ABC for Red Snapper, the ABC recommendation from the May 2018 SSC meeting still stands

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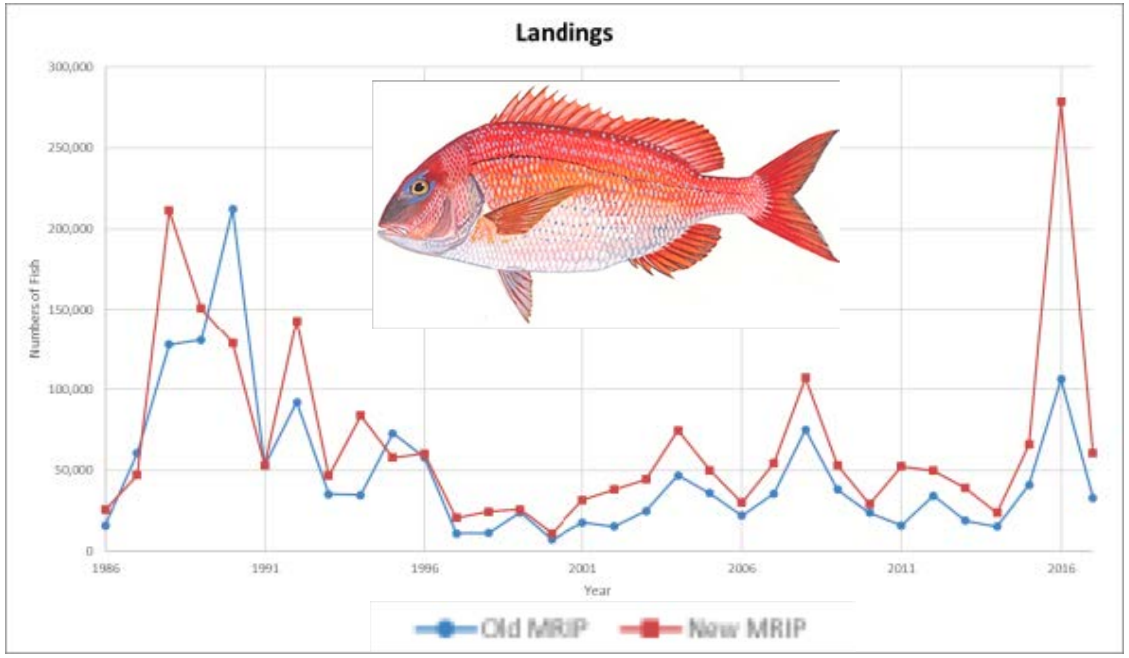
SSC Review of MRIP *Data* Revisions

SSC Action: Review MRIP estimates for all SAFMC stocks

- Identify any stocks that SSC would like to investigate in further detail and develop process for conducting such investigations
  - Red Porgy

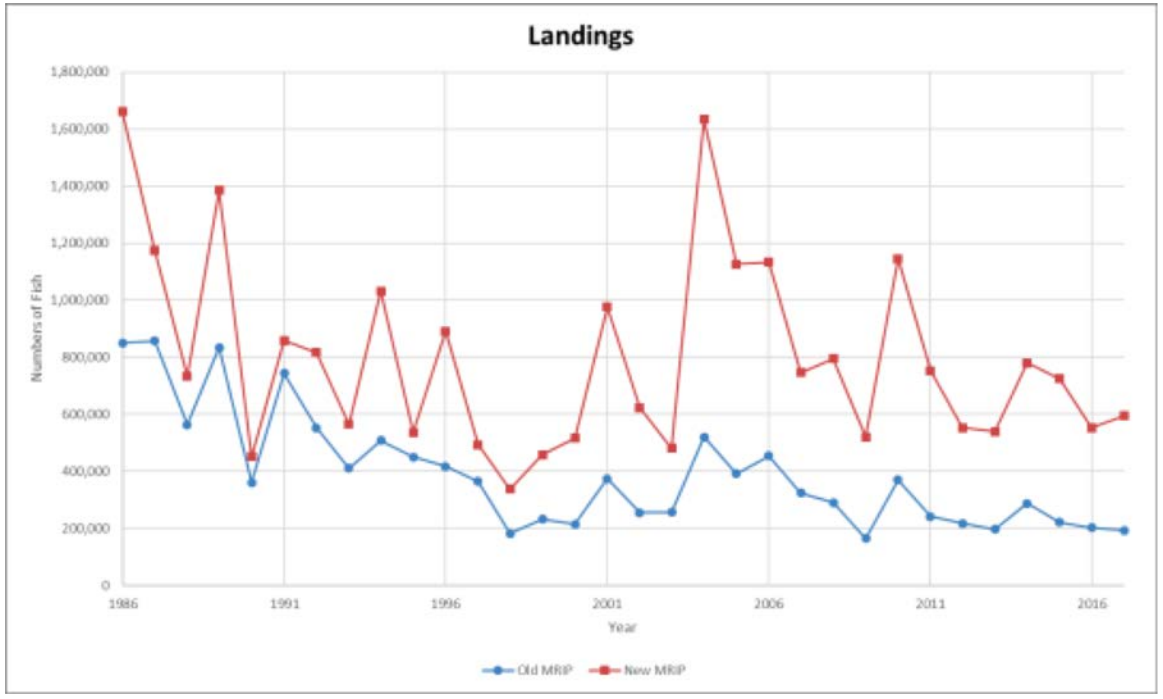


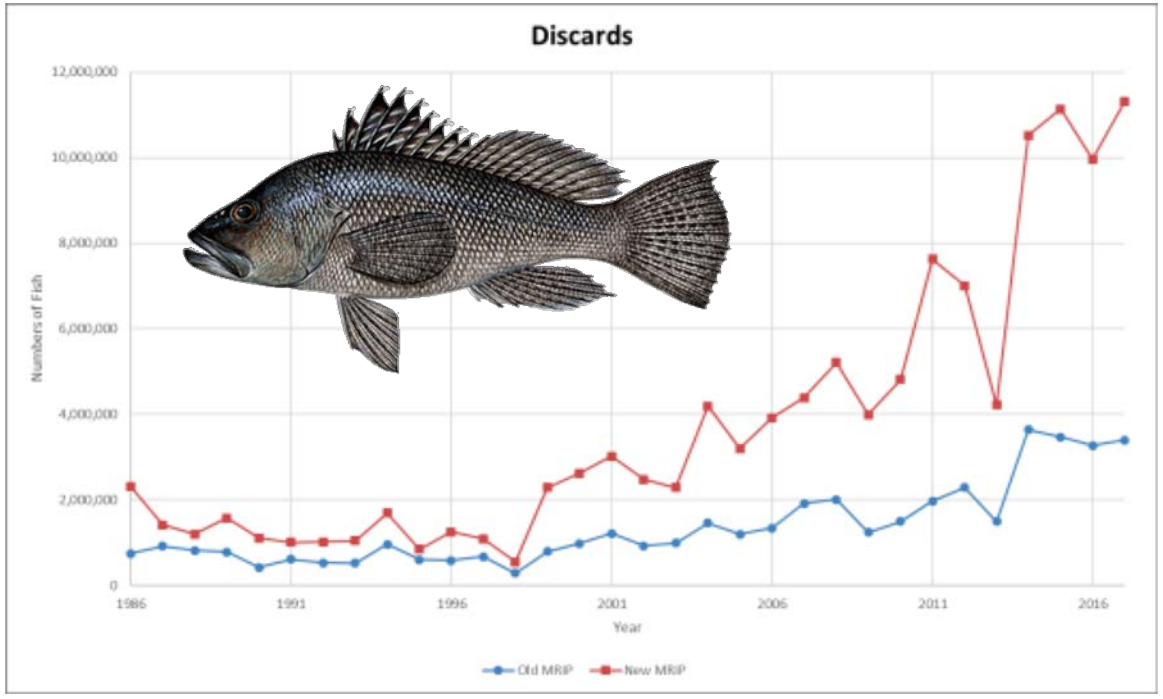
- Why in a category where catch estimates were about the same?
  - Category mainly species of very low intercept rates
  - Red Porgy has fairly high rate of intercepts compared to all other species in this category, which does not follow the pattern
- Examine potential causes of this observed pattern in the lack of effect of MRIP calibrations on Red Porgy given the large number of intercepts

SSC Review of MRIP *Data* Revisions

Action: Review MRIP estimates for all SAFMC stocks

- Identify any stocks for further investigation (continued)
  - Black Sea Bass
    - Examine potential cause of large increase in discards in recent years
    - Possibly incorporate into upcoming revision webinar





SSC Review of MRIP *Data* Revisions

Action: Review MRIP estimates for all SAFMC stocks

- To conduct these investigations:
  - Look at sources of info to help interpret pattern
    - MRIP intercept data
    - Effort expansion data
  - Add to ToR for upcoming assessments: Evaluate calibrated MRIP estimates and how new vs. old estimates affected assessment or analyses

SSC Review of MRIP *Data* Revisions

SSC Action: Identify biological, social, or economic concerns that the Council should be aware of

- Some problems SSC identified in original MRIP estimates remain
  - E.g., low number of intercepts for certain species or areas of interest
- Increase in effort expansion due to MRIP catch calibration may exacerbate problems seen with original MRIP catch spikes
  - Spikes in original MRIP data are amplified
    - Adjacent low points are not increased proportionally, magnifying the difference
  - Acceptable data amounts and variability still open for discussion relative to use in assessments and ACL monitoring

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SSC Review of MRIP *Data* Revisions

SSC Action: Review the calibrated MRIP data with respect to changes to the ABC recommendations for unassessed stocks

- The SSC recommends reviewing years used for ORCS/Decision Tree (99-08) ABC recommendations
  - Evaluate appropriateness of years in light of MRIP estimate changes

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SSC Review of MRIP *Data* Revisions

SSC Action: Discuss the procedure for updating the ABC recommendations for unassessed stocks

- Committee felt it needed dedicated time and an SSC Workgroup for this
  - Workgroup to do preparatory work for a workshop
    - Involving SEFSC and former experienced SSC members in Workgroup
    - Contact neighboring SSCs to see how they are approaching this
  - Workshop prior to the Spring 2019 SSC meeting to discuss ABC recommendations
    - Timing of implementation of new values of ABC based on new MRIP or revised ABC CR
    - Investigate variance of landings estimates with respect to setting ABCs and tracking ACLs
    - Determine if some species can be designated Ecosystem Component species and would therefore not need an ABC

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NOAA FISHERIES

Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Beaufort Lab

Revised stock assessments of Black Sea Bass, Blueline Tilefish, Red Grouper, and Vermilion Snapper in the U.S. South Atlantic region

October, 2018

SSC Review of MRIP Assessment Revisions

Revised stock assessments of Black Sea Bass, Blueline Tilefish, Red Grouper, and Vermilion Snapper

- Models were identical to those applied previously
  - Sole differences were MRIP recreational landings and discards
- Report did not provide details of analysis and model outputs
- On average adjusted MRIP estimates were about twice as large as in previous estimates
  - General upward trend

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SSC Review of MRIP Assessment Revisions

Revised stock assessments of Black Sea Bass, Blueline Tilefish, Red Grouper, and Vermilion Snapper

- Black Sea Bass overfished and overfishing (unlike SEDAR 56 for both)
- Blueline Tilefish (S Cape Hatteras) not overfished (like SEDAR 50) but undergoing overfishing (unlike SEDAR 50)
- Red Grouper overfished and overfishing (like SEDAR 53 for both, but more so)
- Vermilion Snapper not overfished or overfishing (like SEDAR 55 for both)

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SSC Recommendations Regarding MRIP Assessment Revisions

- SSC concurs with NMFS and peer review that new MRIP estimates are BSIA
- Would like an evaluation of the impact low levels of sampling have when changes in MRIP estimates result in a major change in stock status or model diagnostics
  - These MRIP estimates did not go through a SEDAR data workshop
    - A data review could have resulted in modifications of some estimates, as occurred with the MRFSS estimates
  - Although same intercept data as was used as in the past, revised effort data may have amplified effects of low intercepts in some cases

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SSC Recommendations Regarding MRIP Assessment Revisions

- Level of detail in information provided in Revision Assessments did not allow SSC to evaluate if new MRIP estimates may warrant data decisions that differ from previous SEDARs or if estimates of key parameters and model inputs may have been affected
  - Previous data decisions may no longer be applicable
  - SSC would like opportunity to examine all typical outputs before making an ABC recommendation

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SSC Recommendations Regarding MRIP Assessment Revisions

- SCC requests additional information (e.g. full output and diagnostics) and recommends that this be discussed in a webinar
  - The webinar has been scheduled for January 25, 2019 to:
    - Review Revision Assessments and additional information to make a recommendation about BSIA
    - Discuss what projections will be requested to formulate ABC recommendations

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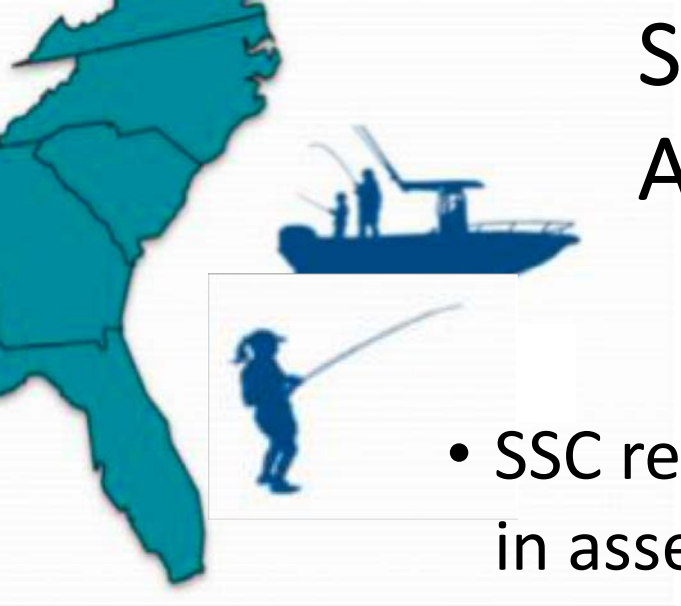

SSC Recommendations Regarding MRIP Assessment Revisions

- SSC recommends a consistent approach for using MRIP estimates in assessments
- SSC will re-evaluate these assessments in light of new MRIP data

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SSC Recommendations Regarding MRIP Assessment Revisions
Impacts on Uncertainty

- SSC may have better idea of uncertainty after webinar
- Trend in discards may cause differences in proportions at age because the size/age composition of discarded fish often differ from those in the landings due to minimum size limits, etc.
  - During open season, discards mostly consist of smaller, younger fish
    - Trend in discards changes proportion of younger fish in population, therefore changing all proportions at age
    - This can affect age compositions and apical F
- New PSEs are higher, but more realistic, for historical data

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Review of New Bag and Size Limit Analysis Methods
SSC Recommendations

- Workgroup completed its efforts and supports the method developed
- WG and SSC considered the method in the analysis as BSIA
- Analysis method will work as long as assumptions are met
- SSC will review through amendment reviews as method is developed for other species

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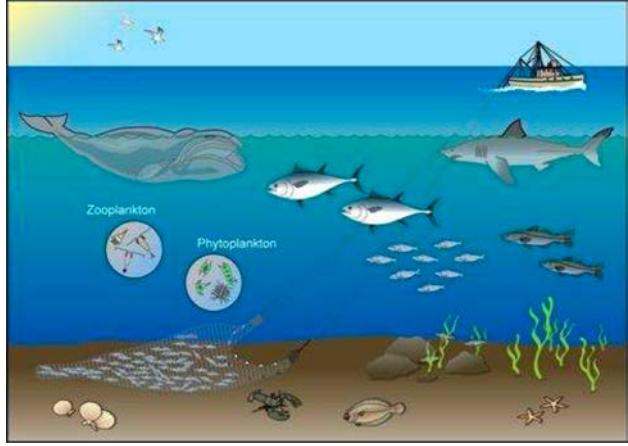
South Atlantic Ecosystem Model Update
SSC Actions



- Consider forming a workgroup for input and review
  - Static model was not completed, making SSC review impossible
    - Once the (static) model is finalized, SSC can then form Workgroup and discuss ToRs and charges
  - Time series and spatial models build on static model
  - Model needs to be rebalanced with new diet and MRIP data
  - SSC feels it does not have enough current understanding of how the model could/would be used to provide fisheries-specific advice to managers
  - How can model be ground-truthed to ensure its outputs correctly inform the management process?
  - SSC requests the modeling group bring examples of model analyses and outputs and how those outputs could inform management to next SSC meeting

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SEDAR Activities
SSC Guidance

- For upcoming assessments, consider inclusion of a ToR requesting a continuity run with the revised MRIP data, using previous model, terminal year, and projection timeframe as was used in last assessment for comparison of stock status
  - Gives insight on whether management measures used were appropriate, given that the MRIP estimates have changed

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SEDAR Activities
SSC Comments from October 2018 Meeting

- SSC approved the TORs and recommended SSC representatives for:
  - SEDAR 68 South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Scamp, Research Track
    - Joint webinar with subset of Gulf SSC to review ToRs and schedule
    - Identified SAFMC SSC participants
  - SEDAR 66 South Atlantic Golden Tilefish, Standard Assessment
  - SEDAR 36 South Atlantic Snowy Grouper, Update Assessment
    - Adding to ToRs exploring sensitivities to steepness values that bracket corresponding SPR values above and below the 26% SPR estimated from last assessment
      - SSC concerned with the fixed steepness value resulting in an MFMT that corresponded to 26% SPR, which they felt was low when compared to similar species
      - Values of 30% to 40% SPR are considered more appropriate for such species and should be included in sensitivities
      - Concerns about the FMSY values coming from set steepness value and would like to explore alternative MFMT proxies

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