

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE



SSC Meeting Overview

April 9 - 11, 2013

**Crowne Plaza
North Charleston, SC**

**VERSION
Briefing Book**

PURPOSE

Topics to address during this meeting:

- SEDAR 38 and 41 planning
- Review assessments of, and provide fishing level recommendations for, black sea bass, cobia and Spanish mackerel
- Consider ABC control rule modifications and ABC recommendations
- Review the annual research prioritization plan
- Discuss the assessment peer review process
- Review Snapper-Grouper Regulatory Amendment 14
- Review Coral Amendment 8
- Receive an update on fishery independent sampling

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Documents:

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- Attachment 2. SEDAR Assessment List
- Attachment 3. 2014 SEDAR Projects Summary
- Attachment 4. SEDAR 38 TORs and schedule
- Attachment 5. ORCS Workshop report
- Attachment 6. Landings trends
- Attachment 7. ABC Control Rule
- Attachment 8. Black Sea Bass Assessment Update**
- Attachment 9. SEDAR 28 Cobia Stock Assessment Report
- Attachment 10. SEDAR 28 Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment Report
- Attachment 11. CIE Reviews
- Attachment 12. SAFMC Research Plan
- Attachment 13. DRAFT Assessment Peer Review Process**
- Attachment 14. MARMAP REPORT
- Attachment 15. Regulatory Amendment 14 Draft
- Attachment 16. Coral Amendment Draft
- Attachment 17. SAFMC Work Plan, March 2013

*** Indicates documents not available for the first Briefing Book.**

SAFMC PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Written comment:

Written comment on SSC agenda topics is to be distributed to the Committee through the Council office, similar to all other Council briefing materials. Written comment to be considered by the SSC shall be provided to the Council office no later than one week prior to an SSC meeting. For this meeting, the deadline for submission of written comment is 12:00 pm Tuesday, April 2, 2013.

SAFMC
4055 Faber Place Drive
Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Verbal comment:

Two opportunities for comment on agenda items will be provided during SSC meetings. The first will be at the beginning of the meeting, and the second near the conclusion, when the SSC reviews its recommendations. Those wishing to comment should indicate such in the manner requested by the Chair, which may be through a show of hands or a written list if the number of interested parties is extensive, who will then recognize individuals to come forward and provide comment. All comments are part of the record of the meeting.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Documents

Agenda

Attachment 1. Minutes of the October 2012 meeting

1.2. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

Approve Minutes

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public will be provided two opportunities to comment on SSC agenda items during this meeting. The first at the start of the meeting, and the final will be provided at the end during the review of recommendations. Those wishing to make comment should indicate their desire to do so to the Committee Chair.

3. SEDAR ACTIVITIES

3.1. Documents

Attachment 2. SEDAR Assessment List

Attachment 3. 2014 SEDAR Projects Summary

Attachment 4. SEDAR 38 TORs and schedule

3.2. Overview

The SEDAR Steering Committee met in February 2014 to finalize 2014 assessment priorities. SAFMC stocks to assess include benchmarks for red snapper and red porgy, and an update for gag grouper. The planned update of greater amberjack will be delayed until possibly 2015 due to a lack of resources within the SEFSC. The SSC is asked to review the preliminary 2014 project schedule and identify any possible conflicts or data deadline issues.

The SSC is asked to provide guidance on models to consider for the 2014 benchmark of red snapper. Prior assessments were based on the BAM model, the standard used for assessments of South Atlantic stocks. In making initial plans for 2014 assessments, the analytical team questioned whether consideration should be given to assessing the stock simultaneously with the Stock Synthesis model framework during SEDAR 41. Considering two model packages during this assessment will likely require that an additional 2014 project be dropped, such as the update of gag grouper.

The SSC is asked to suggest participants, and review the schedule and terms of reference for SEDAR 38, king mackerel. This assessment will consider the

Gulf and South Atlantic Migratory units of king mackerel and will therefore involve representatives from both the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils.

The SSC is asked to provide guidance on stocks to assess in 2015 and beyond. Prioritizing assessments for 2015 will be particularly useful to the Council, as the Steering Committee will consider 2015 priorities in Fall 2013.

Table 1. SEDAR Assessment Projects for the South Atlantic, 2013-2017.

Year	Stocks	Status
2013	1.Gray triggerfish B 2. Blueline Tile B 3. Snowy STD 4.Black Sea Bass U	Final
2014	1. Red Snapper B 2.Red Porgy B 3. Gag U	Final
2015	1. gray snapper B 2. Dolphin B 3. Wahoo B 4. Tilefish ? Red grouper U ? Vermilion U? Greater Amberjack U?	Tentative
2016	white grunt B Speckled Hind B Warsaw grouper B wreckfish B Red Snapper U Snowy U Blueline U	Tentative
2017	Red Porgy U + Black Sea Bass U (rebuild target 2016) Gag U	Tentative

3.3. Action

- Review and Comment on the 2014 SEDAR schedule
- Provide guidance on red snapper models (SEDAR 41)
- Approve SEDAR 38 TORS and schedule
- Identify SSC and other participants for SEDAR 38
- Provide guidance on future assessment priorities

SSC RECOMMENDATIONS:

4. ABC CONTROL RULE

4.1. Documents

Attachment 5. ORCS Workshop report

Attachment 6. Landings trends

Attachment 7. ABC Control Rule

4.2. Overview

A second SSC ORCS (Only Reliable Catch Stocks) workshop will be held immediately prior to this meeting. The SSC will discuss workshop recommendations and consider if modifications to the ABC control rule are necessary. The SSC will also consider applying the modified ABC control rule to support updated ABC recommendations for unassessed stocks addressed during the ORCS workshops.

4.3. Presentation

ORCS Workshop Recommendations -- Luiz Barbieri

4.4. Action

- Recommend modifications to the ABC Control rule
- Recommend ABC values for ORCS

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

5. BLACK SEA BASS ASSESSMENT UPDATE REVIEW

5.1. Documents

Attachment 8. Black Sea Bass Assessment Update**

(Document will be distributed via email when available)

5.2. Overview

An updated assessment of black sea bass was requested last fall, to evaluate the impacts of the fishery in recent years and an increase in fishery independent survey abundance. The SSC is asked to review the update assessment and provide revised fishing level recommendations as necessary.

The Council is holding a special meeting on May 13, 2013, to consider black sea bass fishing level recommendations. To allow time for distribution of briefing materials for that meeting, the SSC is asked to expedite distribution of its recommendations on this agenda item and provide them to the Council by April 18. If the full SSC report of this meeting is not completed at this time, the SSC may provide these recommendations via a memo or letter from the SSC Chair to the Council.

5.3. Presentation

A presentation will be made through a webinar.

5.4. Action

- Consider whether the update is adequate for providing management advice.
- Provide fishing level recommendations consistent with the ABC control rule.
- Comment on assessment uncertainties
- Provide guidance on the next assessment - type and timing.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

Black Sea Bass Status and Fishing Level Recommendations

Criteria	Value
Overfished evaluation	
Overfishing evaluation	
MFMT	
MSST	
MSY	
ABC Control Rule Adjustment	
P-Star	
OFL	
ABC Recommendation (list by year if appropriate)	

6. SEDAR 28 STOCK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

6.1. Documents

Attachment 9. SEDAR 28 Cobia Stock Assessment Report
Attachment 10. SEDAR 28 Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment Report
Attachment 11. CIE Reviews

6.2. Presentation

Presentations will be made through a webinar.

6.3. Overview

The SSC is asked to review the SEDAR 28 benchmark stock assessments of cobia and Spanish mackerel, and provide fishing level recommendations.

6.4. Action

The following Terms of Reference should be considered for both assessments.

- Consider whether the assessment is adequate for providing management advice.
- Provide Fishing Level Recommendations for cobia consistent with the ABC control rule.
- Provide guidance and advice on assessment uncertainties
- Provide recommendations on the next assessment (type and timing)

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

Spanish Mackerel Status and Fishing Level Recommendations

Criteria	Value
Overfished evaluation	
Overfishing evaluation	
MFMT	
MSST	
MSY	
ABC Control Rule Adjustment	
P-Star	
OFL	
ABC Recommendation (list by year if appropriate)	

Cobia Status and Fishing Level Recommendations

Criteria	Value
Overfished evaluation	
Overfishing evaluation	
MFMT	
MSST	
MSY	
ABC Control Rule Adjustment	
P-Star	
OFL	
ABC Recommendation (list by year if appropriate)	

7. SAFMC ANNUAL RESEARCH PRIORTIES

7.1. Documents

Attachment 12. SAFMC Research Plan

7.2. Overview

The Revised MSA requires that Councils regularly provide prioritized research needs to NOAA Fisheries. Plans addressing SAFMC needs are prepared annually, reviewed by the SSC, and approved by the Council. The SSC is asked to comment on the current version.

7.3. Action

- Review and comment

8. ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW PROCESS

8.1. Documents

Attachment 13. DRAFT Assessment Peer Review Process**
(Document will be distributed via email when available)

8.2. Overview

At the October 2012 meeting the SSC convened a sub-group to develop a process for peer reviewing stock assessments, particularly those offered outside the SEDAR process, and to offer a process for consideration by the Committee at this meeting.

The following is taken from the October 2012 SSC Report:

In general, the Committee felt that ‘outside’ assessments should be handled through a SEDAR-like process, i.e., outside analysts would contact SEDAR staff for coordination with data providers, SSC members, etc. in order to begin an assessment for a particular species. Subsequently, the assessment would be formally reviewed by a legitimate process (CIE, SSC, etc.). Several SSC members wanted to emphasize the importance of a data workshop for every assessment. A “closet” assessment is problematic because there is no participation from the beginning and, therefore, no discussion of the appropriateness of the data, applicability of the model, etc.

The Committee discussed the need for developing criteria for document submittal and presentations. It was emphasized that analysts and/or groups involved in these types of assessments should be made aware of the need to share their data and models/software beyond the initial assessment process (i.e., availability/willingness to participate in follow-up work should be a criterion). However, the system needs to be flexible enough to accommodate outside people willing to accept the administrative and analytical burden associated with this process. Also, the process should be broad enough to accommodate all types of analyses, not just stock assessments.

An SSC subcommittee was appointed to draft a list of criteria and develop a short report on what would be required for the SSC to accept review of outside assessments/analyses.

Subcommittee composition: Steve Cadrin (Chair), John Boreman, Scott Crosson, Doug Vaughan, Anne Lange, Churchill Grimes, and Jim Berkson.

The subcommittee will focus on two main issues: (1) standards and (2) process for handling non-traditional assessments.

Some items to be considered by this subcommittee include:

- Establishment of a panel composed of Council staff and SSC members to screen review requests and help coordinate with SEDAR.*
- A mechanism for non-panel members to participate/comment. Perhaps discussion by entire group of interested parties, but panel has ultimate say on review.*
- What if analysis is so complicated it can't be reviewed after the fact? In some cases SSC needs to have insight/involvement in what decisions are made throughout the process. May want to lay out criteria for an assessment where SSC must be involved from the beginning.*
- Criteria should be instructive to the people proposing an analysis for review, so they are able to take the necessary steps to prepare the analysis for SSC review in advance.*
- Need to include all parties who have a stake and wish to be involved in some capacity. Do not want for anyone to feel shut out of this process.*
- Discuss use of ACCSP data standards, which are readily available to everyone and allow replicability of analysis and results.*

8.3. Action

- Recommend criteria and approaches for considering and peer reviewing stock assessments developed outside of the SEDAR process.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

9. FISHERY INDEPENDENT REEF FISH SAMPLING

9.1. Documents

Attachment 14. MARMAP REPORT

9.2. Presentation

Overview of sampling programs and recent results: Marcel Reichert. SC DNR

9.3. Overview

The Committee will be provided an update and summary presentation on efforts to monitor reef fish populations in the South Atlantic.

9.4. Action

Review and comment as necessary

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

**10. SNAPPER-GROUPER REGULATORY AMENDMENT
14**

10.1. Documents

Attachment 15. Regulatory Amendment 14 Draft

10.2. Overview

Staff Contact: Myra Brouwer

This amendment addresses management measures for several snapper grouper species.

Proposed actions include:

- Amberjack – fishing year
- Gray triggerfish – consistent size limit measurement
- Black sea bass fishing year (recreational and commercial)
- Vermilion snapper – modify commercial fishing seasons
- Hogfish – increase the minimum size limit
- Modify aggregate grouper bag limit
- Modify commercial accountability measure for gag
- Modify the recreational accountability measure for vermilion snapper

10.3. RA14 Schedule

NOI	May 23, 2012
Scoping Complete	January/February 2012
Council reviews options & makes recommendations	March 2013
SSC review	April 2013
APs review	April/May 2013
Council review & approve for Public Hearing	June 2013
Public Hearings	August 2013
Final Review & Submission	September 2013
Regulations implemented	2014

10.4. Action

Review and comment on the Actions.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

11. CORAL AMENDMENT 8

11.1. Documents

Attachment 16. Coral Amendment Draft

11.2. Overview

Staff Contact: Anna Martin & Roger Pugliese

Staff contact: Anna Martin

New discoveries of deepwater coral ecosystems were brought forward by the Council's Coral Advisory Panel in 2011. The AP's recommendations have led the Council to propose boundary modifications to the original coral protection areas to increase protections for deepwater coral based on new information in the South Atlantic. Areas proposed for modification include: Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC), Stetson-Miami Terrace Coral HAPC, and Cape Lookout HAPC. The Council is also considering a transit provision through the Oculina Bank HAPC. The actions to modify Coral HAPCs were originally included in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3 and were split out from this Amendment during the June 2012 Council meeting.

11.3. Schedule:

Scoping Complete	February 2012
Council reviews options & makes recommendations	June 2012-March 2013
SSC review	April 2013
APs review	2012 & 2013
Council review & approve for Public Hearing	June 2013
Public Hearings	August 2013
Final Review & Submission	September 2013
Regulations implemented	2014

11.4. Action

Review and comment on AP recommendations and analyses.

- Do the proposed modifications to the Coral HAPCs meet the Purpose and Need for Coral Amendment 8?
- AP recommendations are based on discoveries of new deepwater coral habitat outside of HAPC boundaries. Do they warrant measures identified in Coral Amendment 8?

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

12. OTHER AMENDMENTS AND ACTIONS

12.1. Documents

12.2. Overview

Numerous amendments are in development for consideration by the Council in 2013. The SSC is provided the following brief update on the status of each action currently in progress. Although no specific TORs are posed for these items, this is an opportunity for the Committee to provide feedback on alternatives and analyses in these actions.

12.3. Snapper-Grouper Regulatory Amendment 16

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 16 considers options to minimize derby conditions in the commercial golden tilefish longline fishery and extend the season. Fishermen have proposed alternatives for analysis that would require fishing on a set schedule, i.e., every other week. However, at the March 2013 meeting, the Council requested that staff convene a meeting of the longline endorsement holders as soon as Amendment 18B is implemented in 2013. The latter would establish the longline endorsement program and other management measures for the golden tilefish fishery. The Council's intent is to hold public hearings on Regulatory Amendment 16 in August 2013.

12.4. Snapper-Grouper Regulatory Amendment 17

Regulatory Amendment 17 is considering MPAs to provide protection to speckled hind and Warsaw grouper. The Council will consider purpose and need statements in September 2013.

12.5. Snapper-Grouper Amendment 22

At the September 2012 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment to implement a recreational tag program for red snapper and deepwater snapper grouper species (golden tilefish, snowy grouper and wreckfish). Options will be presented to the Council at the June or September 2013 meeting.

12.6. Snapper-Grouper Amendment 30

Amendment 30 is considering VMS requirements.

12.7. Coastal-Migratory Framework Action

This Framework includes actions to change the minimum size limit for Atlantic Group king mackerel; adjust the commercial trip limit in the Florida East Coast Sub-zone for Atlantic Group king mackerel; create an exemption to the size limit for Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel gillnets in August and September; and allow a portion of a third net in the Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel gillnet fishery. The Council will review actions and alternatives in March 2013; approve for public hearings in June 2013; and submit for final approval in September or December 2013.

12.8. Coastal-Migratory Pelagic Amendment 19

Joint Amendment 19 was reviewed at a joint meeting with the South Atlantic and Gulf Mackerel Committees in March 2013. The amendment will be approved for public hearing in June 2013 and reviewed for final approval in September 2013. The actions include consideration of a prohibition on bag limit sales of king mackerel and Spanish mackerel, including an exemption for tournament sales; options to reduce the number of king mackerel commercial permits by eliminating inactive permits or making inactive permits non-transferable; and modifications to income requirements for king mackerel and Spanish mackerel commercial permits.

12.9. Coastal-Migratory Pelagic Amendment 20

Joint Amendment 20 was reviewed in March 2013, and will be approved for public hearing in June 2013 and reviewed for final approval in September 2013. The actions include changes to zone and sub-zone allocations, fishing seasons and commercial trip limits for Gulf Group king mackerel. Additionally there are actions to: establish transit provisions through closed king mackerel areas; consider a commercial quota for North Carolina king mackerel and Spanish mackerel; modify the framework procedure to allow the Councils to make changes to ABCs, ABC/ACL control rules, and AMs through frameworks; and adjust the cobia ACL and ACT.

12.10. Coastal-Migratory Framework Action

The South Atlantic CMP Framework Action was reviewed in March 2013. The amendment will be approved for public hearing in June 2013 and reviewed for final approval in September 2013. Actions include: modifying the minimum size limit for Atlantic Group king mackerel; changes to the commercial trip limit in the Florida East Coast Sub-zone for Atlantic Group king mackerel; modifications to at-sea transfer provisions for the Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel gillnet fishery; and adjustments in the Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel commercial quota and trip limit system.

12.11. Comprehensive Ecosystem Based Amendment 3

12.12. Dolphin-Wahoo Amendment 5

The SSC reviewed the planned actions for Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 5 in October. The actions that remain in the document that the SSC reviewed at that time include revising the ABCs, ACLs, recreational ACTs, and sector AMs for dolphin and wahoo, modify the sector allocations and the framework procedure for dolphin and wahoo. At their March 2013 meeting, the Council added an action to look at establishing commercial trip limits for dolphin. Council and Regional Office staff are preparing the analyses and draft document for review by the Council at their June 2013 meeting, where the Council is expected to vote to send the draft amendment out for public hearings in August 2013. The Council is scheduled to vote to submit the document to the US Secretary of Commerce at their September 2013 meeting.

13. COUNCIL WORKPLAN UPDATE

13.1. Documents

Attachment 17. SAFMC Work Plan, March 2013

13.2. Overview

The Committee is provided the SAFMC work plan "Follow-up" document at each meeting so it can stay informed of Council activities. Questions or comments about specific items should be addressed to the staff assigned to each FMP, as summarized below.

- Coastal Migratory Pelagic - Kari MacLauchlin
- Corals - Anna Martin
- Fishery Ecosystem Plan - Roger Pugliese
- Snapper Grouper - Myra Brouwer
- Spiny Lobster
- Golden Crab - Brian Chevront

14. OTHER BUSINESS

15. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW, PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is provided an additional opportunity to comment on SSC recommendations and agenda items.

The Committee is provided an opportunity to review its report and final recommendations.

Timing for Black Sea Bass Recommendations: The Council will hold a meeting to discuss black sea bass fishing levels on May 13, 2013. To allow adequate time for preparation and distribution of the meeting materials, the SSC is asked to provide its recommendations to the Council based on review of the black sea bass assessment update, Item 5 in this agenda, by April 18 through a memo from the SSC chair to the Council Chair.

The Final SSC report should be provided to the Council by May 3, 2013.

16. NEXT MEETINGS

16.1. SAFMC SSC MEETINGS

2013 Meetings Scheduled

October 22-24, 2013: Charleston

2014 Tentative Dates

April 22 -24, 2014

October 28 - 30, 2014

16.2. SAFMC Meetings

2013 Council Meetings

June 10-14, 2013: Stuart, FL

September 16-20, 2013: Charleston, SC

December 2-6, 2013: Wilmington, NC

2014 Council Meetings

March 3- 7, Savannah GA

June 9 - 13, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL

September 15 - 19, Charleston SC

December 1 - 5, New Bern, NC

17. ADJOURN