SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

SSC Meeting Overview

April 18-20, 2023

Town and County Inn

Charleston, SC

CONTENTS

TABLES

DOCUMENTS

* Indicates materials not available for briefing book at time of posting. These materials will be added to the recent materials section when available.

SAFMC PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Written comment:
Written comment on SSC agenda topics is provided to the Committee through an online form, similar to all other Council briefing materials. Written comment can be submitted at this link. For this meeting, the deadline for submission of written comment is 5:00 p.m., April 19, 2023.

Verbal comment:
Two opportunities for comment on agenda items will be provided at set times during SSC meetings. The first will be at the beginning of the meeting, and the second near the conclusion. Those wishing to comment should indicate such in the manner requested by the Chair, who will then recognize individuals to provide comment.

An opportunity for comment on specific agenda items will also be provided as each item comes up for discussion. Comments will be taken after all the initial presentations are given and questions from the SSC are answered, but before the SSC starts making recommendations to address the action items. As before, those wishing to comment should indicate such in the manner requested by the Chair, who will then recognize individuals to provide comment. All comments are part of the record of the meeting.

Meeting Format:
This meeting will be held in-person at the Town & Country Inn, Charleston, SC. Online registration for the meeting can be found at the Council's website: https://safmc.net/scientific-and-statistical-committee-meeting/

1.   INTRODUCTIONS

1.1   Documents

Attachment 1a. SSC April 2023 Agenda
Attachment 1b. Transcript from the January 2023 meeting

1.2   Action

➢ Introductions and new member appointment.
➢ Review and approve agenda.
➢ Approve transcript from January meeting.

2.   PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is provided this comment period for any general comments pertaining to any items on the agenda. There will also be time provided for public comment during each specific agenda item as they are discussed. Those wishing to make comment should indicate their desire to do so to the Committee Chair.

3.   REVIEW OF POPULATION PROJECTIONS

3.1   Documents

Attachment 3a. SEFSC presentation: Review of Population Projections

3.2   Presentation

Dr. Erik Williams, SEFSC

3.3   Overview

In the most recent stock assessment for Scamp/Yellowmouth, landings and discards were combined in assessment projections, which is a different approach from how the projections have been modeled in other assessments. Previously, assessment projections for landings and discards had been separated, but the projections imposed a link between the landings and discard exploitation rates so that both responded the same to alternative projected mortality rates. The Council requested the SEFSC provide a presentation on the handling of discards and landings in assessment projections to the SSC that included a review of how projections have been prepared in the past and address the recommendation that estimated discards will be tied to management action in future projections. The SSC should consider how interpretation of P* values and application of the ABC Control rule will be impacted by an alternative approach to projecting future landings and discard values, as well as how management actions, sector allocations, and ACLs in future amendments could be impacted.

3.4   Public Comment

3.5   Action
> Consider how this change will impact the application of the ABC CR, evaluation of P*, and providing fishing level recommendations for the Council.
  o Discuss how changes in discard assumptions or catch selectivity from management actions will affect the ability to provide updated ABCs.
> Discuss how projected stock-level discards and landings can be allocated to fishery sectors to provide ACLs.
> Discuss changes in default projections from SEDAR assessments and adjustments in ABC setting.

4.   SEDAR 76: BLACK SEA BASS OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

4.1   Documents
Attachment 4a. SEDAR 76: Black Sea Bass SAR
Attachment 4b. SEDAR 76: Black Sea Bass Presentation
Attachment 4c. SAFMC ABC Control Rules

4.2   Presentation
Dr. Matthew Vincent, SEFSC

4.3   Overview

This operational assessment evaluated the stock of black sea bass, *Centropristis striata*, off the southeastern United States. The primary objectives were to update and improve the 2018 SEDAR 56 assessment of black sea bass and to conduct new stock projections. Using data through 2016, SEDAR 56 had indicated that the stock was not overfished and not undergoing overfishing though this was only in the recent years. For this assessment, data compilation and assessment methods were guided by methodology of SEDAR 25 and SEDAR 56, as well as by current SEDAR practices. The assessment period is 1978–2021.

Available data on this stock included indices of abundance, landings, discards, and samples of annual length and age compositions from fishery dependent and fishery independent sources. Four indices of abundance were fitted by the model: one from the recreational headboat fleet, one from the commercial lines fleet, one from the MARMAP blackfish/snapper trap survey, and one from the SERFS that combined chevron trap and video sampling. Data on landings and discards were available from recreational and commercial fleets.

The primary model used in the SEDAR 25 benchmark assessment and updated in this operational assessment was the Beaufort Assessment Model (BAM), a statistical catch-age formulation. Results suggest that spawning stock declined until the early 1990s, increased gradually until the late-2000s, with a large increase in 2009 and 2010, and then declined precipitously. The base run estimate of terminal year (2021) spawning stock is below the MSST (SSB_{2021}/MSST = 0.32) indicating that the stock is overfished, and the estimated fishing rate is

above F_{MSY}. The terminal estimate, which is based on a three-year geometric mean, is above F_{MSY} in the base run ($F_{2019-2021}/F_{MSY} = 2.14$). Thus, this assessment indicates that the stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing.

Projections with $F = 0$ indicate that the stock could recover to its target of SSB_{MSY} within ten years if recruitment returns to its long-term average. If recruitment remains low, the stock abundance will remain low and not achieve SSB_{MSY}.

The SSC is asked to review, discuss, and provide feedback on the SEDAR 76 Black Sea Bass Operational Assessment model configurations, projections, and uncertainties. If the assessment is determined to be suitable for providing management advice, the SSC will apply the ABC Control Rule and make catch level recommendations.

4.4 Public Comment

4.5 Action

- **Review assessment**
  - Does the assessment address the ToRs to the SSCs satisfaction?
  - Is the assessment consistent with BSIA guidance and practices?
  - Does the assessment reliably capture past trends in the fishery and population?
  - Does the assessment provide a reliable, quantitative estimate of current stock status?
  - Does the assessment provide reliable predictions of future conditions to support fishing level recommendations?

- **Identify, summarize, and discuss assessment uncertainties.**
  - Review, summarize, and discuss the factors of this assessment that affect the reliability of estimates of stock status and fishing level recommendations.
  - Describe the risks and consequences of the assessment uncertainties with regard to status and fishing level recommendations.
  - Are methods of addressing uncertainty consistent with SSC expectations and the available information?
  - List (in order of the greatest contribution to risk and overall assessment uncertainty) and comment on the effects of those assessment factors that most contribute to risk and impact status determinations and future yield predictions.

- **Provide fishing level recommendations.**
  - Apply the ABC control rule. Discuss and make recommendations on probability of rebuilding projections.
  - Comment on any difficulties encountered in applying the Control Rule, including any required information that is not available.

➢ **Provide advice on monitoring the stock until the next assessment.**
  o What indicators or metrics should be included in the SAFE Report to monitor and evaluate the stock until the next assessment? Current data will be included:
    ▪ Total Landings relative to ABC from the previous assessment until values from SEDAR 76 are adopted.
    ▪ Recreational (CHTS and FES values) and Commercial Landings
    ▪ Trends in abundance included in SEDAR 76
    ▪ Economic trends
      • Recreational – MRIP Directed Trips
      • Commercial – Ex-Vessel Value
    ▪ Social trends
      • Observations of Closures
      • Comments from Fishery Performance Report
    ▪ Recent management actions

➢ **Provide research recommendations and guidance on the next assessment.**
  o Review the included research recommendations and indicate those most likely to reduce risk and uncertainty in the next assessment.
  o Provide any additional research recommendations the SSC believes will improve future stock assessments.
  o Provide guidance on the next assessment, addressing its timing and type.

➢ **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

Table 1. Black Sea Bass Catch Level Recommendations

Criteria	Deterministic	Probabilistic
Overfished evaluation ($SSB_{2001}/MSST$)	0.32	0.37
Overfishing evaluation ($F_{2019-2021}/F_{MSY}$)	2.14	2.04
MFMT (F_{MSY})	0.41	0.36
SSB_{MSY} (1E10 eggs)	407.15	481.97
MSST (1E10 eggs)	254.47	283.74
MSY (1000 lbs.)	941.37	893.45
Y at 75% F_{MSY} (1000 lbs.)	918.95	871.45
ABC Control Rule Adjustment		
P-Star		
SSC recommended $P_{Rebuild}$		
M	0.375	
Generation Time	~ 6 years	

OFL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2025				
2026				
2027				
2028				
2029				

ABC RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2025				
2026				
2027				
2028				
2029				

5. SEDAR 68OA: ATLANTIC SCAMP OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

5.1 Documents

Attachment 5a. SEDAR 68OA: SPR, Rebuilding Time Frame, and Forecast Scenarios
Attachment 5b. SEDAR 68OA: Scamp Presentation
Attachment 5c. NOAA-NMFS 10732 SAFMC March 2023 memo

5.2 Presentation

Dr. Kyle Shertzer, SEFSC

5.3   Overview

The SEDAR 68OA: Scamp Operational Assessment was reviewed during the January 2023 SSC meeting where it was determined to be consistent with BSIA, used methods of addressing uncertainty that are consistent with expectations and available information, and is an adequate basis for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations. The estimated spawning stock biomass (SSB) has fluctuated throughout the time series but has been declining since the mid-2000s. The terminal (2021) base-run estimate of spawning stock was near its lowest level of the time series and was well below the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) (SSB_{2021}/MSST = 0.27), as was the median estimate (SSB_{2021}/MSST = 0.29), indicating that the stock is overfished. The estimated fishing rate has fluctuated around the Maximum Fishing Mortality Threshold (MFMT, represented by $F_{40\%}$) throughout most of the assessment period, but has exceeded it only once since 2010. The terminal estimate, which is based on a three-year geometric mean, is below $F_{40\%}$ in the case of the base run ($F_{2019-2021}$/$F_{40\%}$ = 0.91) and the median ($F_{2019-2021}$/$F_{40\%}$ = 0.81). Thus, this assessment indicates that the stock is overfished, but is not experiencing overfishing. The SSC during review determined that the assessment with regard to SSB/SSB_{MSY} is robust and shows clear overfished status (100% of MCBE runs indicated SSB_{2021}/MSST<1). Overfishing status (F/F_{MSY}) includes greater uncertainty; the base run indicates overfishing is not occurring in recent years (2019-2021), but approximately 30% of MCBE runs estimate that overfishing was occurring.

The primary reason for the low stock size in terminal years of the assessment is not fishing, but rather low recruitment. Recruitment has been lower than average since the mid-2000s, and the lowest values for the entire time series occur since 2010. The SSC determined that the assessment provides a good basis to predict future conditions and support fishing level recommendations; however, the consistently lower recruitment during the recent period (2010-2019), relative to mean recruitment for the full time series, results in substantial uncertainty in predictions of future recruitment and stock biomass.

The SSC should review the additional rebuilding projections and make catch level recommendations in the table below. They also should provide guidance on setting ABC for the Shallow Water Grouper Complex with Yellowmouth Grouper being removed from the complex. The other unassessed species in this complex will be addressed through the Unassessed Stocks Workgroup process; however, the scamp/yellowmouth stock falls under statutory deadline for rebuilding because of the overfished status.

5.4   Public Comment

5.5   Action

- ➢ Review additional requested rebuilding projections and timelines.
- ➢ Complete the fishing level recommendations table.
- ➢ Describe potential methods to develop an ABC for the Shallow Water Grouper Complex that can be developed in the timeline associated with the amendment.

➢ **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

Table 2. Scamp Catch Level Recommendations

Criteria	Deterministic		Probabilistic	
Overfished evaluation (SSB/MSST)	0.36		0.38	
Overfishing evaluation ($F/F_{MSY\ proxy}$)	0.91		0.81	
MFMT ($F_{MSY\ proxy}$)	0.28		0.30	
SSB_{MSY} (metric tons)	1503.87		1540.65	
MSST (metric tons)	801.60		801.14	
MSY (1000 lbs.)	372.28		381.39	
Y at 75% F_{MSY} (1000 lbs.)	344.83		353.68	
ABC Control Rule Adjustment	20%			
P-Star	30%			
SSC recommended $P_{Rebuild}$	70%			
M	0.155			
Generation Time	~ 10 years			
OFL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2025				
2026				
2027				
2028				
2029				
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2025				
2026				
2027				
2028				
2029				

Note: Landings includes dead discards

6.   SEDAR 78: SOUTH ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

6.1   Documents

Attachment 6a. Spanish Mackerel Summary and Background Presentation
Attachment 6b. SEDAR 78: Spanish Mackerel Revised SAR
Attachment 6c. SEFSC Spanish Mackerel Review April 2023
Attachment 6d. SSC recommended changes for assessment re-run
Attachment 6e. Setting ABCs guidance and ABC Control Rules
Attachment 6f. NOAA Fisheries Procedure 01-101-10
Attachment 6g. NOAA Fisheries Procedure 01-101-11
Attachment 5c. NOAA-NMFS 10732 SAFMC March 2023 memo

6.2   Presentation

Dr. Erik Williams, SEFSC

6.3   Overview

At the January 2023 SSC meeting, the Committee approved the scope of work for the Spanish Mackerel operational assessment re-run, which was then sent to the SEFSC. At the March Council meeting, the SEFSC determined that the SSC's recommendations regarding natural mortality, assumed recruitment and catch estimates should be considered for the next scheduled stock assessment but due to the extensive rework required would not be available for this assessment (see Attachment 5c). The Center recommended that the SSC develop ABC advice based on the current assessment and analysis completed to date. It also determined that the use of data-limited approaches such as DB-SRA or DCAC in place of the current age-structured assessment model would not be consistent with BSIA.

The SSC should determine whether the current SEDAR 78 model is sufficient for providing management advice and provide an ABC for Spanish mackerel during this meeting. Several alternate options to using the assessment projections for generating ABCs were presented in January (Equilibrium OY, yield at 75%F_{MSY}, 3rd highest landings, etc.), and the SSC should discuss the pros/cons of using these alternate methods in lieu of the assessment projections for making catch level recommendations.

6.4   Public Comment

6.5   Action

➢ Determine whether the current SEDAR 78 stock assessment is sufficient for providing management advice.
➢ Provide values for OFL and ABC and make catch level recommendations for each proxy.

➢ **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

Table 3. South Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Catch Level Recommendations

Criteria	Deterministic	Probabilistic
Overfished evaluation (SSB_{2020}/MSST)	1.40	1.42
Overfishing evaluation ($F_{2018-2020}$/F_{MSY})	0.77	0.74
MFMT ($F_{MSY\ proxy}$)	0.516	0.523
SSB_{MSY} (metric tons)	6406	6410
MSST (metric tons)	4804	4808
MSY (1000 lbs.)	8210	8351
Y at 75% F_{MSY} (1000 lbs.)	8024	8158
ABC Control Rule Adjustment	10%	
P-Star	40%	
M	0.35	
OFL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2023				
2024				
2025				
2026				
2027				
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2023				
2024				
2025				
2026				
2027				

7.   DEEPWATER CORAL DISTRIBUTION MODEL

7.1   Documents

Attachment 7a. Deepwater Coral Distribution Model Presentation
Attachment 7b. Data Synthesis and Predictive Modeling of SEUS Corals

7.2   Presentation

Matthew Poti, NOAA-NCCOS

7.3   Overview

The SAFMC created Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (CHAPCs) in the Coral, Coral Reef, and Live/Hardbottoms (Coral) FMP (1983) and Coral Amendment 6 (2008) and expanded CHAPCs in Coral Amendment 4 (2001) and Coral Amendment 8 (2014) based on observed locations and likely distribution of coral and coral reefs. New observations from remotely operated vehicles have identified coral mounds outside of current CHAPCs and additional mapping data were collected to refine past coral habitat probability models. The methods and data used in coral habitat probability models were reviewed by the SSC in October 2019, where it was recommended that further development of these modeling approaches would be helpful in determining BSIA criteria and use in management. If approved as usable for management, the coral habitat probability models would be considered in development of future amendments.

7.4   Public Comment

7.5   Action

➢ Review and discuss the methodology, uncertainties, and assumptions associated with the distribution model to describe habitat probability.
➢ Determine whether this analysis is consistent with BSIA and is appropriate for use in managing fisheries resources.

8.   GREATER AMBERJACK ESTIMATION PROJECT UPDATE (POSTPONED)

8.1   Documents

Attachment 8a. Presentation of Greater Amberjack Estimation Project
Attachment 8b. Greater Amberjack project narrative

8.2   Presentation

Dr. Sean Powers and Dr. Mark Albins, University of South Alabama, and Dr. John Hoenig, Virginia Institute of Marine Science

8.3   Overview

~~The overarching goal of the proposed research initiative is to provide an independent estimate of Greater Amberjack abundance in the US Gulf GoM and SA in waters out to 150 m in depth. The independent estimate of abundance derived from the proposed research will be compared with the estimates derived from the stock assessment models used by NOAA Fisheries (Stock Synthesis, Beaufort Assessment Model), allowing validation, calibration, and further refinement of the model. To accomplish this goal, an expansive sampling program focused on providing a rigorous estimate of Age 1+ Greater Amberjack that can be separated into length bins and stratified by region and habitat type. The sampling design will be informed by a comprehensive data synthesis (fisheries-dependent and independent data, previous habitat mapping and traditional fishermen knowledge). Sampling approaches will be refined through intensive calibration studies. Key assumptions of our sampling design and approaches as well as supportive information will be collected through a series of companion studies. These supportive projects include studies that are designed to examine unresolved issues associated with our understanding of movement and connectivity of Greater Amberjack in the southeastern U.S.~~

> ~~8.4   Public Comment~~

> ~~8.5   Action~~
>> ~~➢ Comment and provide feedback on the methods and potential uncertainties for the Greater Amberjack research project.~~

9.   UPDATE ON THE APPROACH FOR THE VERMILION SNAPPER INTERIM ANALYSIS

9.1   Documents
Attachment 9a. Update on the Approach for the Vermilion Snapper Interim Analysis

9.2   Presentation
Dr. Erik Williams, SEFSC

9.3   Overview
An interim analysis for vermilion snapper by the SEFSC is scheduled for SSC review in October 2023. NOAA staff will discuss the approach for the interim analysis modeling approach and data inputs for vermilion snapper. The overall interim analysis approach was reviewed by the SSC in Oct 2022 and recommendations are included in the final meeting report. The SSC should discuss the approach and data inputs, and how the information could be used for providing catch advice for vermilion snapper.

9.4   Public Comment

9.5   Action
> ➢ Discuss the approach and data inputs.

➢ Discuss if the interim approach should be used to develop ABC adjustments (up and down) or serve as a health check on current status.

10. SSC WORKGROUPS

10.1 Documents

Attachment 10a. Current membership of SSC workgroups
Attachment 10b. SAFMC SSC Workgroup Approach Document
*Attachment 10c. SADL workgroup scope of work

10.2 Presentation

Dr. Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff

10.3 Overview

Two new SSC workgroups need to be formed to address recent topics of interest that merit increased focus. The first is examining recent low recruitment issues for a number of stocks and the concept of regime shifts, non-stationarity, and how this would affect stock status determination criteria. The second workgroup would serve as a standing review body for scopes of work for upcoming assessments to increase efficiency of this process. An existing workgroup, the Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) workgroup, needs additional membership that will review and guide the integration of Ecospace into the existing South Atlantic EwE model. Lastly, SEDAR's 2024 Hogfish Benchmark Assessment planning team has requested that one South Atlantic SSC member join the planning team. This assessment will be conducted by FWC. SAFMC Staff will review the current membership of SSC workgroups and SEDAR panels and solicit membership for the workgroups. The approved SSC workgroup approach document is attached for reference.

The South Atlantic Deepwater Longline (SADL) survey was developed to survey deep-water species inhabiting the continental shelf and upper slope habitats of the Southeastern US. To incorporate information into SEDAR stock assessments, the SSC has been asked to review a report from the Southeast Fishery Science Center documenting the sampling design and methodology and data generated from this survey. An SSC workgroup comprised of five members was formed that has been tasked with providing comments during the development of a final report that will be presented to the SSC. The SSC will review the survey and ensure the methods are consistent with best scientific information available (BSIA) at their October 2023 meeting. The goal is that, upon review, the SADL survey will be sufficient to incorporate into the stock assessment process without the need for a topical working group for every assessment.

10.4 Public Comment

10.5 Action

➢ Review SSC rosters of workgroups.
➢ Review SADL workgroup scope of work.

        o   Will this review be sufficient to incorporate the SADL survey into each assessment without the need for a topical working group?

- Form SSC workgroups for:
  - (1) Regime Shifts
  - (2) Standing Scope of Work
  - (3) Ecopath with Ecosim
  - (4) Hogfish Planning Team Member
  - (5) Discard projections and ABC setting

11. SEP REPORT SUMMARY

11.1   Documents

*Attachment 11a. SEP meeting draft report (when available)

11.2   Presentation

Dr. Scott Crosson, SEP Chair

11.3   Overview

The SSC will receive a summary of topics discussed at the SEP meeting. Particular agenda items include the Socio-economic impacts of COVID, and Portfolio Analysis in Support of EBFM. The SEP meeting summary and report will be added to the final SSC report.

11.4   Public Comment

11.5   Action

- No actions required.

12. USING PORTFOLIO THEORY TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF LIVING MARINE RESOURCES

12.1   Documents

Attachment 12a. Portfolio Analyses of South Atlantic Fisheries Report
*Attachment 12b. Presentation on Portfolio Analyses of South Atlantic Fisheries

12.2   Presentation

Dr. Jason Link, NOAA and Dr. Steve Cadrin, Lauren Brewster, and Fiona Edwards, UMASS

12.3   Overview

Staff from NOAA Fisheries and UMASS Dartmouth are working together to develop an ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) approach using portfolio theory to help maximize

revenue. The project focuses on the commercial sector for which landings and revenue were available. The frontier analysis of the snapper-grouper commercial fishery indicated that observed revenue could have been achieved with less risk of foregone yield or more revenue could have been obtained with the same risk. This is the first review of the approach for South Atlantic fisheries.

12.4   Public Comment

12.5   Action
➢ Discuss the findings of the frontier analysis and provide guidance on how to refine the analysis.
➢ Describe how the Council could use this information in the development of ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM).

13.   SERFS 2022 TRENDS REPORT

13.1   Documents
Attachment 13a. Presentation on SERFS and SEAMAP 2022 trends report

13.2   Presentation
Dr. Tracey Smart, SCDNR

13.3   Overview
The SSC will receive an update on the Southeast Reef Fish Survey (SERFS) and Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) sampling efforts and results through 2022.

13.4   Public Comment

13.5   Action
➢ Review the 2022 trends report from the SERFS and SEAMAP surveys.

14.   SAFE REPORTS UPDATE FOR SNAPPER GROUPER

14.1   Documents
*Attachment 14a. SAFE reports update for Snapper Grouper FMP

14.2   Presentation
Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC Staff

14.3   Overview

Council staff have started to develop Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports. These reports are required through National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The report should contain the best scientific information available on the condition of the stock, essential fish habitat, marine ecosystems, and fishery. These reports can serve as regular updates to the SSC and Council to aid in discussing the condition of the stock and potential need for adjusting current management measures. The SSC is asked to review and provide feedback on the latest SAFE report for snapper grouper.

14.4   Public Comment

14.5   Action
➢ Review and comment on the content for the snapper grouper SAFE report.

15.   FWC GEAR TYPE ANALYSIS

15.1   Documents
Attachment 15a. FWC gear type analysis

15.2   Presentation
Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC Staff

15.3   Overview
The SAFMC has considered single hook rigs to reduce the discard rate for snapper grouper species in Action 2 of Amendment 35: Snapper Grouper Release Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels, to address overfishing for red snapper from the last stock assessment projections. Datasets from FWC and Council Staff were presented and reviewed by the SSC in Oct 2022, and these have been used as justification for Action 2 of the amendment. An additional dataset from FWC in the Gulf of Mexico utilizing single-hook/double-hook data will be reviewed to determine if this information can be considered informative for providing the directionality of discards for red snapper.

15.4   Public Comment

15.5   Action
➢ Discuss if the FWC gear type study can be considered informative for quantifying discard reductions in the snapper grouper fishery.
➢ Determine if the information from the three studies on single hook and multi-hook rigs provides evidence that Red Snapper catches would be reduced using single hook rigs.

16.   SOUTH ATLANTIC RESEARCH AND MONITORING PLAN

16.1   Documents

Attachment 16a: South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Plan 2023-2027

16.2   Presentation

Dr. Judd Curtis and Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC Staff

16.3   Overview

The Council revises their research and monitoring plan every two years. The research and monitoring plan is used by the Council and NOAA Fisheries staff to identify and prioritize research needs for fisheries in the South Atlantic. These research needs are circulated to funding agencies to be included as research grant priorities and used by researchers during development of research proposals. The Committee is provided an opportunity to review the 2023-2027 South Atlantic Research and Monitoring plan. The Council will consider the plan at its June 2023 meeting.

16.4   Public Comment

16.5   Action

➢ Review and comment on the 2023-2027 South Atlantic Research and Monitoring plan.

17.   OTHER BUSINESS

➢ New SSC webpage overview
➢ Role of SSC Chair discussion
➢ Fishery Management Plan updates
➢ SCS8 Theme Options
➢ Take SSC photo

18.   PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is provided one final opportunity to comment on SSC recommendations and agenda items.

19.   CONSENSUS STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is provided with an opportunity to review its report, final consensus statements, and final recommendations.

The Final SSC report will be provided to the Council by noon on Friday, May 12th, 2023 (approximately 3 weeks from the end of the meeting) for inclusion in the briefing book for the September Council meeting.

20. NEXT MEETINGS

20.1 Scientific and Statistical Committee Meetings
- ➢ July Webinar (*as needed*)
- ➢ October 24-26, 2023 in Charleston, SC
- ➢ April 15-16, 2024 in Charleston, SC (SEP)
- ➢ April 16-18, 2024 in Charleston, SC (SSC)

20.2 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meetings
- ➢ June 12-16, 2023 in St. Augustine, FL
- ➢ September 11-15, 2023 in Charleston, SC
- ➢ December 4-8, 2023 in Beaufort, NC

ADJOURN