SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

SSC Meeting Report

FINAL

April 14-16, 2026

Town & Country Inn

2008 Savannah Highway

Charleston, SC

VERSION
FINAL
5/19/26

CONTENTS

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 10:00 a.m., April 16, 2026.

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 and 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. April 2026 SSC Agenda
Attachment 1b. October 2025 SSC Meeting Minutes

1.2 Action

- Introductions
- Review and approve agenda.
  - *Agenda was approved with one minor adjustment (Agenda item 11, SERFS Update, was moved to Wednesday morning, after Agenda item 7)*
- Approve minutes from the October 2025 meeting.
  - *Minutes were approved.*

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.

No written or verbal comments were provided.

3. FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT AND COUNCIL ACTIVITY UPDATES

3.1 Documents

Attachment 3. FMP Amendment and Council Activity Updates

3.2 Presentation

SAFMC Staff

3.3 Overview

The SSC will receive updates on several ongoing fishery management plan amendments in progress or completed where SSC review was involved. The goal for this agenda topic is to update the SSC on the current and upcoming fishery management plan amendments and discuss potential future involvement in the development of fishery management plan amendments with scientific input and recommendations. Specific updates will focus on the Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation, Spawning Special Management Zones, Blueline Tilefish Abbreviated Framework, and the upcoming Standardized Bycatch Reduction Methodology 5-year Review.

3.4 Public Comment

No Public comments were provided

3.5 Action

- No committee action needed.
- General Comments by the SSC
    - *The committee noted that it seems to be taking a long time to complete the review process for these amendments. The committee was informed that this is a nationwide issue.*
    - *With regard to Amendment 61, the committee noted that the 14 species proposed to be removed from the snapper/grouper complex are likely lower risk species. Given that risk ratings are relative, the committee inquired as to whether the removal of these species would affect the risk ratings of the remaining species.*
    - *The SSC noted that it needs to address the ABC control rule for tiers 2-4 (See Comprehensive Amendment 45). This is especially relevant for Unassessed Snapper Grouper Species ABCs/ACLs/Allocations. The Committee requested that this be put on the agenda for one of the upcoming SSC meetings.*

4. SEDAR ACTIVITY AND ASSESSMENT UPDATES

4.1 Documents

Attachment 4a. Upcoming Assessment Updates
Attachment 4b. SEDAR New Infographics

4.2 Presentation

Dr. Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff

4.3 Overview

Council staff will provide updates on various SEDAR projects currently ongoing and scheduled, including timelines for review, and other projects relevant to SSC meeting business. The Committee will also receive an update on materials SEDAR staff has developed including new infographics to assist in tracking and scheduling of various assessment components.

4.4 Public Comment

No Public comments were provided.

4.5 Action

- No committee action needed.
- General Comments from the SSC:
    - *The committee was informed that the Assessment Technical Team (ATT) would no longer be necessary. Instead, the Science Center will reach out to*

individual SSC members directly for their expertise during the assessment process. The SSC expressed some concern that not having ATTs may affect the SSC's ability to provide feedback during the assessment process, which may lead to discussions during SSC review that can result in requests for additional analyses and/or model runs.

- *The SSC asked for clarification on who would be responsible for determining the pathway in the SEDAR Stock Assessment Decision Tree. Council staff clarified that the SEDAR Steering Committee will be responsible for selecting the appropriate pathway, with input from the Council and SSC.*

5. RESILIENT FISHERIES: ECOSYSTEM INFORMATION REVIEW

5.1 Documents

Attachment 5a. Resilient Fisheries: Ecosystem Review Project Summary
Attachment 5b. Ecosystem Information Review Preliminary Report
Attachment 5c. Ecosystem Information Review Presentation
*Attachment 5d. Project Summary with SSC Questions

5.2 Presentation

Dr. Sarah Gaichas, Hydra Scientific LLC

5.3 Overview

The Resilient Fisheries: Ecosystem Information Review project aims to strengthen management outcomes by expanding the use of ecosystem information and collaborative research within the South Atlantic region. It will assess how all U.S. regional fisheries management councils utilize ecosystem data products and decision support tools, provide comparative insights, and identify best practices and develop strategies for integration into SAFMC management processes. The project will also address practical implementation requirements, evaluate opportunities for cooperative data collection, and develop prototype ecosystem indicators tailored to regional needs. The SSC will receive an update on the progress of this project and provide feedback as needed to assist with project development and implementation.

5.4 Public Comment

No Public comments were provided

5.5 Action

- Receive preliminary report on the Resilient Fisheries Project: Ecosystem Information Review and comment on the mechanisms for including ecosystem information in the ABC setting processes in other Councils.

    - *The inclusion of international examples in addition to US examples of how ecosystem information is utilized for setting thresholds, such as FMSY, would also be beneficial. An example from the Irish Sea may specifically be useful (see the following paper for details: Bentley et al 2021; Refining Fisheries*

Advice With Stock-Specific Ecosystem Information. Front. Mar. Sci. 8:602072. doi: 10.3389/fmars.2021.602072).

- *Even where ecosystem information is available, its influence on ABC recommendations and risk tolerance decisions remains limited and inconsistent.*
- *Clearer guidance is needed to define how ecosystem indicators should inform risk table scoring and ABC-setting decisions.*
- *Effective integration of climate information requires consideration of both species vulnerability and environmental exposure (i.e., observed or projected changes), as either component alone is insufficient to inform risk.*

➢ Provide feedback on the potential for inclusion of ecosystem information through similar or different mechanisms for the South Atlantic region.

- *The SAFMC is well-positioned for incorporating habitat and ecosystem components into its management process because it has included related policies in management plans. Nevertheless, extensive work will be needed to actually incorporate such effects in the assessment of stock status and benchmarks and their implementation into management.*
- *Environmental variables and sources of information have been used previously in stock risk ratings.*
- *Recruitment trends are currently the most consistently used proxy for potential environmental effects; however, they are retrospective indicators and do not provide predictive insight into future stock dynamics.*
- *The Committee discussed several other ecosystem and vulnerability indicators to consider:*
  - *Above sea level indicators (e.g. bad weather days, wind speeds/wave heights, etc.) that may lead to reduced effort/catch.*
  - *Climate vulnerability results may serve as a screening tool to identify key sensitivities (e.g., temperature, acidification), which can guide the selection of targeted environmental indicators for specific species.*
- *The SSC also recommended assessing correlations between and among environmental indicators. Indicator development should prioritize variables that provide unique (non-redundant) information to avoid overrepresentation of highly correlated metrics.*
- *The SSC was informed that Council staff will compile a list of species' ABC Control Rule stock risk ratings completed (6) and applied (2).*
  - *Staff will compile this list and send it to the project lead.*
  - *Include adjustments to susceptibility tables where information was updated and/or discussed to differ.*
- *Current challenges to including ecosystem information in assessments and management include:*
  - *Lack of standardized guidance for interpreting and scoring ecosystem and environmental components.*

        - *Limited availability of quantitative environmental indicators for direct inclusion in risk tables.*
        - *Difficulty incorporating environmental drivers into stock assessment frameworks beyond qualitative discussion.*
    - *The SAFMC already has several products that can be leveraged to support the incorporation of ecosystem considerations into management. These include: essential fish habitat information, the citizen science program, climate vulnerability analysis and its previous modeling investments (i.e., the SAFMC is the only council with its own food web model).*
        - *Current applications of the food web model are primarily focused on hypothesis testing and scenario exploration. Additional work is needed to translate model outputs into management-relevant metrics and integrate them into ABC-setting or risk evaluation frameworks.*
    - *The SSC and Dr. Gaichas discussed the development of novel approaches, such as using the food web model to support a multispecies MSE and using the hypothesized drivers of species climate vulnerability to inform ecosystem indicator development.*
        - *Initial implementation should prioritize a small, targeted set of indicators that can be clearly linked to existing decision frameworks (e.g., risk tables), with iterative refinement over time rather than attempting comprehensive integration at the outset.*

6. DOLPHIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION (MSE) OPERATING MODEL REVIEW

6.1 Documents

Attachment 6. Dolphin MSE Presentation

6.2 Presentation

Dr. Cassidy Peterson, SEFSC and Dr. Tom Carruthers, Blue Matter Science

6.3 Overview

The purpose of the Dolphinfish Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) project is to develop an empirical management procedure for dolphin in the US Atlantic that can be used to set catch levels along with additional management actions. This procedure will be simulation tested to be robust to uncertainty and incorporate stakeholder participation to ensure the management procedure meets stakeholder-defined objectives.

The SSC will receive an update to the Dolphin MSE and have the opportunity to provide feedback on the development of the operating model and its uncertainties, various performance metrics, and initial perspectives on select management procedures and parameterizations. They should also make any recommendations to the review panel on specific model components to evaluate, as needed. A review panel consisting of three CIE reviewers and two SSC reviewers will convene this summer to review the final

operating model. SSC members interested in serving as a reviewer or as chair of the review panel should consider volunteering.

6.4 Public Comment

No Public comments were provided

6.5 Action

- Review the operating model, its uncertainties, and performance metrics.
    - *The SSC commends the Dolphin MSE team for the work of this project. It includes a lot of valuable information important for the SSC and Council.*
    - *The SSC asked if there are stock (or management unit) delineation concerns? Potentially separate stock from Brazil waters in the Atlantic reported in the literature. The Research team responded that there is likely not enough data available to truly delineate stocks. The SSC agreed that therefore, making the assumption of one Atlantic management unit is suitable for this MSE.*
    - *Fleet selectivity uncertainties:*
        - *This MSE assumes that selectivities are held constant across seasons, years, and regions, but if management actions can change selectivity, this assumption may be invalid. The SSC recommended examining spatiotemporal patterns in length comps by fleet for evidence of potential changes in selectivity in response to history of management measures. If found, conduct alternative model testing to demonstrate robustness.*
    - *Economic or weather changes could affect the spatial distribution of effort, and this could affect the spatial distribution of catch, independent of the spatial distribution of the stock or changes in catchability. The SSC was wondering if economic and weather changes can be considered in the operating models (i.e. change in fuel prices, increase in bad weather days, change in spatial distribution of bad weather days, etc.)?However, the SSC decided not to make such a request until it had an opportunity to review preliminary results.*
        - *The project team responded that robustness runs were not done with respect to these issues, but it could address these indirectly by changing the level, temporal distribution, and spatial distribution of effort within the MSE.*

- Consider operating model as consistent with BSIA determination.
    - *The SSC recommends that this be evaluated after the results of the CIE review. SSC will see the CIE reports and additional Council discussion in its October 2026 meeting.*
    - *The SSC expressed concern that the MSE product (even if designated as BSIA) may not provide a traditional scientific basis for management given our ABC-setting procedures, but that it will likely allow for the determination of a proxy (e.g., ACL). The SSC would like to have further demonstration of options and*

will continue to discuss this in the future (see SSC presentation request below).

- Advise on the management procedure structure and parameterization.
  - *Static vs dynamic empirical control rule*
    - *Assumes management can be rapidly responsive, especially in the case of dynamic management procedures; what are the implications for the stock and use of this MSE in management if not?*
  - *Predictive indices proposed (e.g., ENSO, recreational landings) reflect regional availability and not overall abundance.*
    - *The SSC would appreciate a briefing on comparable examples from other international cases for the processes of setting catch levels on the available portion of the stock vs. overall abundance.*

- Provide feedback on the potential scientific uncertainties and implications of regulatory amendment 3 scoping options.
  - *One of the primary assumptions of the model is that the modeled dolphinfish is a closed population. This is not the case, and the research team acknowledged that; however, the uncertainty resulting from violating this assumption is unknown.*

- Identify and make recommendations to the review panel on specific model components and uncertainties to evaluate, as needed.
  - *The SSC requested a presentation on clarifying the role of the SSC in ABC setting, or how the SSC should approach ABC setting, within the overall MSE process, including application of the ABC Control Rule.*

- Recruit SSC members for the review panel (2 reviewers, 1 chair).
  - *Matt Damiano (Chair)*
  - *Jeff Buckel (Reviewer)*
  - *Kelsey Roberts (Reviewer)*

7. NMFS FRAMEWORK FOR NARROWING SCOPE OF MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCE

7.1 Documents

Attachment 7a. NMFS Risk Value Prioritization Framework
Attachment 7b. CCC Response Letter on Risk Value Matrix
Attachment 7c. SAFMC Comment Letter on Risk Value Matrix
*Attachment 7d. SEFSC Risk Value Matrix Calculations

7.2 Presentation

~~SEFSC Staff (TBD)~~ SAFMC Staff

7.3 Overview

At the May 2025 CCC meeting, NMFS discussed the need to "narrow the scope of NMFS management and science" to accommodate future agency resources and capabilities. In March 2026 the Council was provided with an update on progress by the SEFSC to further develop tools to assist decision making related to narrowing the scope of management (Attachment 7a). Additional information on management alternatives that could be considered for the risk/value categories was provided, along with progress on compiling the value and risk information necessary to assign stocks to risk/value categories. A national approach has been developed to support comparisons across regions. SEFSC staff will provide an overview of the risk value effort and details on the analyses being used to populate the various data components of the priority matrix. The SEP will review analyses specific to the economic and social criteria used in the priority matrix.

7.4 Public Comment

7.5 Action

- ~~Evaluate the biological and environmental sources used for risk/value categorization and assessment.~~
  - ~~Climate Vulnerability Analysis (CVA) for susceptibility to the environment~~
  - ~~Productivity and Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) for susceptibility to fishing scores.~~
  - ~~Ecosystem importance scores using SURF index method (Plagányi and Essington 2014).~~
- ~~Will results of the biological/environmental component of this effort, as designed, be useful in helping to guide decisions on the scope of science and management?~~

- *The SSC was informed that this work has been temporarily paused and therefore did not receive an update on this project. The committee received this notification just prior to the start of the April meeting. The SSC expressed disappointment that Council staff and the SSC did not know until yesterday (4/14) that this work was suspended, despite the fact that it was announced last week at the Gulf and Mid-Atlantic Council meetings. If the SSC had been informed, members would not have had to spend time reviewing briefing book materials that were irrelevant to this meeting.*
- *The SEP received a presentation on the social and economic analyses. Full details are included in the attached SEP report (Appendix A).*
  - *The SEP emphasizes the need for a Social Values tool like this one that is being rapidly developed by the SEFSC social science group. They would like to see sufficient time and resources allowed to the Science Center to continue to work in this direction, as the Social Values component holds great promise.*
  - *The SEP strongly recommended that the development of this Social Values tool continue regardless of other developments on the economic and environmental components of the framework for narrowing scope.*

8. WRECKFISH STOCK ASSESSMENT MODEL

8.1 Documents

Attachment 8a. Wreckfish AIM Project Summary
*Attachment 8b. Wreckfish Preliminary Stock Assessment Report
*Attachment 8c. Wreckfish Stock Assessment and MSE Presentation

8.2 Presentation

Dr. Jeremy Collie, URI and Dr. Josh Nowlis, Lynker

8.3 Overview

The Council has contracted with Lynker to develop a management procedure for the Wreckfish fishery. This project will apply an adaptive management technique called Adaptive Implementable Management (AIM) to guide a stakeholder-driven management development process for the South Atlantic Wreckfish fishery. During this process, contractors will work directly with managers and stakeholders to develop management recommendations more robust to future uncertainty. Stakeholder engagement is being prioritized throughout the AIM process, with interviews and stakeholder workshops planned throughout the project period. The resulting management recommendations will be provided to the Council for their consideration and action.

As part of the Management Procedure framework, an updated stock assessment model is being developed to inform the management procedures. The last stock assessment for Wreckfish was completed in 2014 with a terminal year of 2010 and reviewed by the SSC in April 2014. The primary assessment tool was a statistical age/length model, with a dynamic production model used as a secondary tool. The current modeling framework identifies several candidate operating models to consider.

The SSC should review the various candidate models and evaluate the proposed assessment methodologies, data inputs, identify potential modeling uncertainties, and provide guidance to model development.

8.4 Public Comment

No Public comments were provided

8.5 Action

- Evaluate the proposed candidate stock assessment model methodology and data inputs.
    - *Closed model assumption concerns*
        - *The model assumes a closed population, but the harvest in U.S. waters is on adults only; recruits and juveniles enter the fishery from outside of U.S. waters. The SSC noted that this model assumption is violated and the associated uncertainty is unknown. However, the SSC also noted that a steepness = 0.9 model configuration likely does nearly*

decouple recruitment from SSB, which would be like assuming an open population, and it would be good to see the stock-recruitment curve from that run to confirm if that's the case.

- *The model also assumes an existing stock-recruitment relationship: the level of recruitment is directly correlated with the spawning stock biomass. The SSC noted that it is unclear if that is indeed the case for Wreckfish.*

- *Data Inputs*
  - *The SSC asked to see the list of stakeholder objectives identified by the interviews conducted by the study. This list was provided in the briefing book folder "Recent Materials 4-15-2026," filename "Wreckfish AIM overview SSC Apr 2026_FINAL.pdf," slide #6.*
  - *Time is being considered as both a dependent and an independent variable in the fishery-dependent index standardization. SSC recommends considering 'day' as an offset if 'vessel' is a categorical variable.*
    - *If trip length differs substantially among vessels, this variation may have an effect on data inputs.*
    - *Recommend creating a model with catch as the dependent variable and effort treated as an offset covariate.*
- *Model fit of aggregated length composition to LPUE index is poor.*
  - *The model fit to the LPUE index captures overall trends but smooths interannual variability, and the SSC raised concerns about whether the model adequately represents observed fluctuations in abundance.*
- *Nominal catch per unit effort for fishery-dependent index*
  - *The SSC noted that assuming the response variable follows a tweedie distribution when the response has few 'zero' observations may be problematic. The SSC would like to look at diagnostic plots associated with model fits when they are available.*
  - *The SSC suggested comparing a VAST or sdmTMB model with GAM model to determine whether spatiotemporal heterogeneity and autocorrelation are fully accounted for using covariates as proxies in the GAM.*

- Identify model uncertainties and provide feedback for further model development.
  - *The committee considered the level of complexity needed for model configuration: was there enough information to support an age-structured assessment model or is perhaps a reduced DLM model more appropriate?*
    - *Committee prefers to proceed with the current age-structured assessment approach. Uncertainties associated with application of a DLM could be greater than the recommended approach using an age-structured model.*
  - *Sources of model uncertainty*
    - *Some of the model uncertainty is also listed above.*

- *Steepness in the Beverton-Holt stock recruitment relationship*
  - *The SSC noted that higher steepness values (i.e., h=0.9 run) are typically associated with stocks that have higher productivity and thus a higher F at MSY. However, given the Wreckfish life history, this is not expected to be the case with this stock. Long-lived species such as wreckfish (max age ~80-90 years) typically have lower steepness values. The SSC recommended the MSE team provide index fits for different operating models. In particular, investigate potential lower values of steepness (h < 0.6) and log-likelihood profiling would be beneficial. Runs with lower steepness values had lower log likelihood values indicating better fits to the data components (index and length compositions).*
- *SigmaR (recruitment variability)*
  - *Sensitivity of reference points to alternative values for sigmaR is being explored, but the true amount R deviates from the stock-recruitment curve is unknown and is an uncertainty that will be explored further by the assessment team.*
- *Population scale*
  - *Given the consistency in the length composition data across years, the committee wondered if the SCAA and production models would be meaningfully different given the lack of differences in the length compositions with higher/lower F values. As mentioned previously, the length composition data originate from the fishery, which is executed in the adult part of the population. This likely explains the narrow length range in the catches.*

➢ *General feedback*
- *As this project is a stakeholder-driven process, members of the SSC request more information about the human dimensions components, and that the work be presented to the SEP to review methods and approaches as well. The SEP Chair requested that the SEP receive a presentation on the broader AIM process, management procedures, etc. and the Committee supported that request.*
- *The SSC requested that it have an opportunity to discuss how the AIM and wreckfish operating models fit into the existing SA-ABC control rule and asked for clarification as to how the overall analysis/stock assessment fits into the SSC's charge to provide ABC recommendations to the Council. (see also request for presentation under agenda item 6 - Dolphin MES).*

9. SOUTH ATLANTIC RED SNAPPER RESEARCH PROGRAM

9.1 Documents

*Attachment 9a. SARSRP Presentations and CIE Review Workshop Summary
*Attachment 9b. Response to CIE Reviewer Requests
*Attachment 9c. Final SARSRP Report
Attachment 9d. (Supplementary) Individual CIE and Review Panel Reports
*Attachment 9e. CIE Review Panel Summary

9.2 Presentation

Dr. Will Patterson, UF and Dr. Dave Portnoy, TAMU-CC

9.3 Overview

The South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program (SARSRP) underwent a comprehensive review from January 13–15, 2026 (https://sarsrp.scseagrant.org/report/). The review panel included three subject matter experts from the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) and two representatives from the South Atlantic Scientific and Statistical Committee. The project team comprised more than thirty collaborators representing seven universities and agencies. During the review workshop, the project team delivered four presentations to supplement the preliminary report submitted to Sea Grant at the end of 2025. The review panel evaluated data inputs, sampling methodologies, analytical modeling, and sources of scientific uncertainty, and provided critical feedback in each of these areas. Independent reports from the CIE reviewers as well as a consensus review panel report were completed following the review workshop and circulated to the SARSRP project team. The project team addressed the review panel's concerns and comments, and these have been integrated into the final report to refine the final abundance estimates and quantified uncertainty.

Results from this project will be incorporated into the SEDAR 90: South Atlantic Red Snapper stock assessment. The Assessment Panel has already been meeting to provide guidance on model development and the integration of the SARSRP results into the stock assessment. A CIE review workshop for SEDAR 90 is scheduled for December 2026 in Beaufort, NC.

9.4 Public Comment

No Public comments were provided

9.5 Action

- Evaluate the response to CIE and Review Panel recommendations from the review workshop.
    - *The SSC agreed with the Review Panel (and the SARSRP Team) that the Red Snapper population estimate based on Bayesian Hierarchical Integrated Modeling (BHIM) should not be used in the SEDAR 90 stock assessment. This was based on uncertainty concerns raised by the Review Panel and the BHIM team.*
    - *The SSC supported the Review Panel decisions on the Close Kin Mark Recapture (CKMR) abundance estimate and to pursue the integration of the CKMR data into the SEDAR 90 stock assessment.*

- *Potential concerns and uncertainties with the CKMR model and methods were discussed:*
  - *The SSC agreed with the Review Panel that the abundance estimates from the CKMR are not independent from the stock assessment. The SARSRP team responded that life history information/parameters from the S90 Data Workshop were used where available. The SSC noted that the stock assessment and both CKMR and BHIM methods share data inputs with the assessment. E.g., the red snapper year-specific relative age composition used as input to the CKMR demographic model was obtained from outputs of the SEDAR 73 Update (see Table 3-2 and 3-3 in the revised SARSRP report); therefore, the two analyses are intrinsically linked and not independent. The SSC noted that, depending on how the CKMR is integrated into the S90 assessment, this may not be a major issue.*
  - *Overdispersion in fecundity at age (reproductive skewness) could result in underestimation of CKMR census population abundance estimates and associated uncertainty.*
    - *The project team investigated the impact of both no overdispersion and extreme overdispersion in fecundity at age and found that it had little effect on the overall estimates (see Chapter 3, p. 76, of final report).*
    - *It was noted that the conversion of fish weight into egg production as an input for the CKMR population model and previous fecundity-at-age estimates (using egg production) that are no longer recommended (as of S90-DW), could create unknown uncertainty.*
    - *The SSC also noted that the use of fish mass for fecundity (as opposed to egg production) is being explored in the study to integrate the CKMR into the BAM model during the assessment phase of SEDAR 90.*

- Did the project team sufficiently address the review panel concerns?
  - *Overall, the SSC consensus was that the SARSRP team addressed the Review Panel's concerns. The Committee discussed their potential concerns relative to the Close Kin Mark Recapture (CKMR) model and methods, which are outlined in the above section.*
- Are there other concerns not identified that could contribute to the uncertainty in the modeling approach and resulting estimates?
  - *The Committee had no additional concerns.*

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR UPCOMING ASSESSMENTS

10.1 Documents

Attachment 10a. Black Sea Bass Terms of Reference

Attachment 10b. Vermilion Snapper Terms of Reference

10.2 Presentation

Dr. Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff

10.3 Overview

The proposed SEDAR stock assessment schedule for South Atlantic species includes an update to Black Sea Bass in 2026 and Vermilion Snapper in 2027. Both assessments are being conducted internally by the Southeast Fishery Science Center. The SSC will review the Terms of Reference for the South Atlantic Black Sea Bass and South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper stock assessments. Comments and recommendations will be passed along to the SEFSC for negotiation and then onto the Council for final approval. Terms of Reference are drafted by SAFMC Staff using recommendations from the approved Statements of Work, SAFMC Research and Monitoring Plan, prior assessment panel recommendations, and SSC review of the prior stock assessment.

10.4 Public Comment

10.5 Action

- Review Terms of Reference for South Atlantic Black Sea Bass
    - *See Appendix B for recommended edits to the TORs.*
    - *The Committee reviewed the ToRs for Black Sea Bass and had extensive discussions about some of the TOR details, including:*
        - *Given that the assessment is to be an agency (SEFSC) led assessment, the SSC expressed concerns that the scope of the TORs may be too broad. For example, TOR3 directs the analyst to "consider new and updated information on life history, natural mortality, discard mortality, stock-recruit relationship". The SSC noted that there is a potential that the analyst may choose to use new information, and that this decision would not be evaluated until the SSC reviews the assessment at the end of the process, unlike in the SEDAR process where multiple individuals are providing input on decisions regarding data inclusion and modeling.*
        - *The SEFSC and Council staff stated that there would be three opportunities for the SSC to provide input on this assessment; namely when the SEFSC calls on SSC expertise during the assessment, during the SSC review panel, and during the SSC final review.*
        - *The SSC discussed whether agency led assessments and SEDAR assessments should have separate sets of TORs. The SSC decided to discuss this issue at a future meeting.*

- Review Terms of Reference for South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper
    - *Based on the discussions about the Black Sea Bass TORs, the SSC recommended postponing the review of the Vermilion Snapper ToRs to the summer webinar meeting and requested that staff discuss alternate ToR*

formats for SEFSC-led assessments with the SEDAR steering committee, SEFSC, and/or Council.

11. SERFS 2025 TRENDS REPORT

11.1 Documents

Attachment 11a. SERFS 2025 Trends Report
*Attachment 11b. SERFS 2025 Trends Presentation

11.2 Presentation

Dr. Tracey Smart, SC-DNR

11.3 Overview

The Southeast Reef Fish Survey (SERFS) annual trends report is intended to serve as an overview of catches and abundance trends of selected species from a collaborative fishery-independent survey using standardized gears. Abundance indices developed for this report are standardized to account for factors that may affect abundance and may have varied over the years such as temperature, depth of sampled stations, location, etc. This report presents a summary of the fishery-independent monitoring and analyses for 20 species in the region derived from chevron-video trap (CVT) catch data collected from 1990 through 2025 by the three monitoring programs (MARMAP, SEAMAP-SA, and SEFIS) involved in SERFS. Specifically, it presents updated annual standardized abundance for CVTs (referred to as an index of abundance). Standardization is applied to account for the effects of potential covariates on abundance. Species distribution maps and annual length information of captured fish are also provided. Data presented in this report are based on a database maintained by SCDNR which houses data from all SERFS partners that was accessed in February 2026.

The SSC will receive an update on the sampling efforts and results of the SERFS sampling program through 2025.

11.4 Public Comment

No Public comments were provided

11.5 Action

- Receive update on trends report.
- *General Comments from SSC:*
    - *The SSC appreciates the annual trends reports and SSC presentation, and commends the researchers on their ongoing monitoring efforts. The committee also appreciates the fact that three regional fishery independent surveys are now included in the overview: SERFS (video trap), SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey, and SADLS (Deep water longline).*
    - *The SSC asked about the potential for spatial and temporal stratification in sampling design. Dr. Smart clarified the current sampling approach and*

mentioned that efforts in collaboration with the SEFSC are underway to analyze a true stratified sampling design. Preliminary results indicate that the difference with the current design may be small. An update can be provided at the next annual update.

- *The SSC recommended that the survey team assess the center of gravity in abundance distribution to track movement over time for each species. (e.g., similar to black sea bass analysis)*
- *The SSC noted that White Penaeid Shrimp standardized and nominal abundance values do not align in the trawl surveys in the later years of the time series (Coastal Trawl Survey 2021-2025). Dr. Smart indicated that this may be due to differences in sampled strata as some were not sampled in certain years due to weather and other reasons.*
- *The Committee commented that it would be useful to compare NE bottom trawl surveys with the SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey and/or Northeast HABCAM with trap survey values north of Cape Hatteras (encounter rates, presence/absence). This may allow tracking northern movement of some species, detecting shifts in the center of abundance, or possibly investigate continuous abundance estimates for some species.*
- *The SSC asked if the South Atlantic Deep Water Longline (SADL) survey recorded information on rates of depredation. This could be informative for change in depredation rates over time. The team replied that this information was indeed recorded.*
- *For the presentation, female maturity (FM) was presented as 50% maturity at size (L50%). Almaco Jacks and Gag had commercial minimum size limits smaller than the L50%. The SSC recommends that the Council address species that have a minimum size limit smaller than L50% because this is biologically risky for the sustainability of populations over time.*
- *The SSC asked if weather issues (e.g., high wind days, wave height, hurricane activity, etc.) had caused disruptions in spatial or temporal survey coverage? The team replied that it looks like sampling cruises are shorter in recent years due to shorter weather windows.*
- *The SSC noted that there was some discussion about identifying jacks on videos during the recent Greater Amberjack Project review and was wondering if that affected the video analyses for the jack species. The team responded that this was mostly an issue for smaller fish and that difficult to identify smaller jacks are listed as Seriola species.*
- *The SSC noted the variability in Spanish Mackerel index. Dr. Smart noted that this may have been caused by including several younger age classes (recruitment) and that this will be further explored and analyzed during the upcoming assessment.*

- *The SSC expressed considerable concern about the downward trends in CPUE of almost all species that were presented, and asked if anything in the sampling or environmental conditions during the sampling season could explain (some of) that. The SERFS team explored differences in temperatures between sampling years. There was some evidence of colder bottom temperatures in the most recent of the last 5 years, especially off Florida, though it was noted that the temperatures for those 5 years were well above historical levels in all but one of the earlier years (2005-2019). It was noted that temperature is one of the standardized parameters used in calculating CPUE. Overall, the team did not identify anything that could explain the downward trend in CPUE other than a reduction in the fish abundance in the survey region.*

12. SEP REPORT SUMMARY

12.1 Documents

*Attachment 12. SEP Meeting Draft Report (when available)

12.2 Presentation

Dr. Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes, SEP Chair

12.3 Overview

The SSC will receive a summary of topics discussed at the SEP meeting. The SEP meeting summary and report will be added to the final SSC report.

12.4 Public Comment

12.5 Action

- Receive update on business conducted at the SEP meeting.
  - *The SEP Chair provided an overview of the SEP discussions (see Appendix A for SEP report).*
  - *The SEP recommended that the SSC be provided with some of the human dimensions context when they are key to the projects or tasks being presented and considered in SSC inputs to ensure that the social and economic information is not completely separated from and irrelevant to the SSC purview.*
  - *The SSC and SEP requested holding occasional joint SEP/SSC meetings for review of agenda items that contain biological, social, and economic elements (e.g., MSEs, certain stock assessments). This could potentially be done on the first day of the April SSC meetings when both SEP and SSC are meeting in the same week, or by webinar.*

13. SSC WORKGROUP AND SECAD PANELS

13.1 Documents

Attachment 13a. SSC SEDAR Appointments
Attachment 13b. SSC Workgroup Appointments

13.2 Presentation

Dr. Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff

13.3 Overview

Council staff will review the list of SSC workgroups and SECAD (SEDAR, Catch Advice, and Data) panel membership and provide any updates from recent work accomplished by the workgroups or SECAD panels, as well as upcoming needs including populating panels with SSC members.

13.4 Public Comment

13.5 Action

- Receive update on SSC Workgroup and SECAD panel appointments.
    - *Joint MSY proxy working group: Given the joint nature of this Workgroup (with the Gulf SSC), scheduling has been challenging, but a first meeting is expected to occur soon. The SSC noted that the recommendations of this workgroup are relevant for many species, but in particular, critical for the Black Sea Bass and Red Snapper assessments.*
    - *Review Panel Members for Black Sea Bass*
        - *Steve Turner*
    - *Dolphinfish MSE*
        - *Jeff Buckel*
        - *Kelsey Roberts*
        - *Matt Damiano (Chair)*
    - *Tables with appointments for Workgroups and SEDAR panels are added as Appendix C to this SSC report.*

14. OTHER BUSINESS

- *The SSC briefly discussed the issue of late, and in some cases missing, briefing book materials. SSC members noted that delays in the availability of meeting materials (including presentations) negatively affect the Committee's ability to properly prepare for the meeting and, as a result, affect the discussions and ability to provide appropriate recommendations. This is especially true for the more complex agenda items such as MSEs and reviews of complex projects and assessments.*

15. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is provided with one final opportunity to comment on SSC recommendations and agenda items.
No public comment was provided

16. 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 15, 2026 (approximately 3 weeks from the end of the meeting) for inclusion in the briefing book for the June 2026 Council meeting.

17. ELECTIONS

- *There was one nomination for Chair:*
    - *Dr. Walter Bubley was elected Chair by acclamation.*
- *There was one nomination for Vice-Chair:*
    - *Dr. James Gartland was elected Vice-Chair by acclamation.*
- *The new Chair thanked Marcel Reichert for his service as Chair during the past 2 years. Marcel thanked the Committee for their trust and support, and for their contributions to the meetings and reports.*

18. NEXT MEETINGS

18.1 Scientific and Statistical Committee Meetings

- Summer Webinar (TBD, if needed)
- October 20-22, 2026 in Charleston, SC
- April 19-22, 2027 in Charleston, SC (SEP/SSC)
- October 26-28, 2027 in Charleston, SC

18.2 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meetings

- June 8-12, 2026 in St. Augustine, FL
- September 14-18, 2026 in North Charleston, SC
- December 7-11, 2026 in Beaufort, NC

ADJOURNED AT 12:00 PM ON 4/16/2026

19. APPENDIX A: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PANEL REPORT

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PANEL OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

SEP Meeting Overview and Summary Report

April 13-14, 2026

Town and Country Inn
2008 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC 29407

PURPOSE

This meeting is convened to discuss and provide input to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) on:

- Recent and developing Council actions and amendments,
- Citizen Science Program projects,
- Improving Communication with and Increasing Resilience of Fishing Communities in the South Atlantic Region project,
- Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation,
- Economic value and social value analyses for the Risk Value Matrix tool,
- Understanding citizen scientists' experience with the SMILE Project (Size Matters: Innovative Length Estimates) project,
- Fishery Performance Report text analysis,
- Introduction to social science and economics for fishermen.

CONTENTS

DOCUMENTS

Attachment 1a: Social and Economic Panel Agenda Overview
Attachment 1b: Minutes from the April 2025 meeting
Attachment 1c: Minutes from the February 2026 meeting

Attachment 2: Recent and developing South Atlantic Council amendments

Attachment 3: Citizen Science Program update presentation

Attachment 4: Increasing Resilience of Fishing Communities introduction presentation

Attachment 5: Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Economics presentation

Attachment 6a: Risk Value Matrix Introduction Presentation to SAFMC (March 2026)
Attachment 6b: CCC Response to NMFS Risk Value Matrix (February 2026)
Attachment 6c: Risk Value Matrix Economic Value Presentation

Attachment 7a: Understanding citizen scientists' experience with the SMILE Project report
Attachment 7b: Understanding citizen scientists' experience with the SMILE Project presentation

Attachment 8: Risk Value Matrix Social Value Presentation

Attachment 9a: FPR Text Analysis Internal Documentation
Attachment 9b: FPR Text Analysis External Documentation
Attachment 9c: FPR Text Analysis Presentation

Attachment 10: Introduction to Social Science and Economics for Fishermen Outline

1. Introduction

1.1. Documents

- **Attachment 1a**. Social and Economic Panel Agenda Overview
- **Attachment 1b**. Minutes from the April 2025 meeting
- **Attachment 1c**. Minutes from the February 2026 meeting

1.2. ACTIONS

- Introductions
- Review and approve the agenda
- Approve April 2025 and February 2026 minutes
- Opportunity for public comment

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The SEP approved the April 2025 and February 2026 meeting minutes and the April 2026 meeting agenda.

2. Recent and Developing Council Actions

2.1. Document

- **Attachment 2**. Recent and developing South Atlantic Council amendments

2.2. Overview

Council staff will provide a briefing on recent and upcoming amendments and actions (***Attachment 2***). The following amendments may be of particular interest to SEP members:

Amendment 61 (Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision)

Purpose of the Amendment: Evaluate whether 14 species currently in the FMU should remain, be removed, or be designated as ecosystem component species. Note: this amendment supersedes an earlier proposed amendment to specify ABCs for unassessed snapper grouper species.
Action Summary: To determine the need for conservation and management of 14 snapper grouper species.
Development level: Scoping completed. In March 2026, the Council reviewed draft purpose and need statements. Narrowed down the scope of species considered in the amendment to 14 species.

Amendment 60 (Commercial management measures)

Purpose of the Amendment: The amendment has two main objectives: 1) address issues related to the commercial Snapper Grouper Unlimited (SG 1) permit, and 2) increase commercial trip efficiency.
Action Summary: Revise the 2-for-1 snapper grouper commercial unlimited permit policy; establish dynamic (step-down) trip limits; and revise existing stowage requirements for gear on board.
Development level: Scoping has been conducted and the amendment is being developed. Approval for public hearings is expected at the June 2026 meeting.

Amendment 62 (Joint State-Federal Management of Recreational Red Snapper)

Purpose of the Amendment: To establish a mechanism for joint federal-state management of the recreational red snapper fishery in the South Atlantic.
Development level: The Council expects to begin development once the states' EFPs have been approved and are underway.

Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass Management Measures)

Purpose of the Amendment: Address depleted status of black sea bass in the South Atlantic immediately with management measures aimed at reducing regulatory discards and protecting the spawning stock.
Action Summary: Establish recreational and commercial annual catch targets that reduce harvest by 50% and revise accountability measures, reduce the recreational bag limit, and implement an annual spawning season closure in February and March for both commercial and recreational sectors.
Development level: Approved for submission

Headboat Vessel Limits

Purpose of the Amendment: Consider developing vessel limits for gag, black grouper, scamp, and yellowmouth grouper that account for the higher number of passengers on headboats compared to charter vessels.
Action Summary: Establish vessel limits that may be based on the number of paying passengers to allow for vessel limits that exceed those established for gag, black grouper, scamp, and yellowmouth grouper onboard private or charter vessels.
Development level: Scoping has been conducted and the amendment is being developed. Approval for public hearings is expected at the December 2026 meeting.

Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation
Purpose of the Amendment: Dead releases are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex. The Council has directed a management strategy evaluation (MSE) project that would consider multispecies effects of potential management changes and be used to develop a more holistic approach to management of the snapper grouper fishery. The amendment will follow the MSE project and consider implementation of management changes evaluated through the MSE.
Action Summary: This amendment will provide actions intended to incorporate recommendations from the MSE project.

2.3. Presentation and Discussion

John Hadley and Christina Curtis, SAFMC staff

2.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate. In general, this agenda item is meant to brief the SEP on potential Council actions that may be presented to the group for review later in the meeting or at a future SEP meeting.

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The SEP appreciated the updates but had no questions.

3. Update on the Citizen Science Program

3.1. Document

- **Attachment 3**. Citizen Science Program update presentation

3.2. Overview

SAFMC staff will provide an update on program activities and recent efforts within the SAFMC's Citizen Science Program. This will include updates on current projects such as SMILE, FISHstory, and SAFMC Release. Staff will also share information on key indicators developed under each of the Program's goal to help evaluate progress, identify opportunities for improvement, and measure the Program's ongoing impact.

Presentation and Discussion

Julia Byrd and Meg Withers, SAFMC staff

3.3. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate. In general, this agenda item is meant to brief the SEP on current citizen science projects that may be presented to the group for review later in the meeting or at a future SEP meeting.

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- SAFMC Release

- SEP understands that the participation and submissions have increased over time, with last year being the strongest yet (with seasonal peaks in fall due to inshore juvenile grouper and May due to shallow water grouper season. If possible, SEP is interested to know the number of participants and submissions in SAFMC Release over time, and more detail about the scale of participation, as well as participant retention outside the Sea Grant competition window.
- As submissions are open to all sectors; location can be reported by state with optional detail and GPS locations are grouped for confidentiality. SEP suggests it could be useful to see release data broken down by location, area, and mode.
- The SEP notes that demographic data is limited to how users heard about the project, sector, and city/state; but suggests collaborating with an outside partner to formally assess user experience would be helpful.
- SEP is curious about whether data previously recommended for use has been utilized, but this information is not available.

- FISHstory, SMILE Project, Planning and Evaluation
  - The SEP appreciate the continuing good work on this project, and wondered if possible to determine whether indicators identified in this project are actually used, and understand that the CitSci program has to prioritize them eligible to be considered for use, since actual use is out of the scope of control for the Cit Sci Program.
  - The SEP notes potential upward bias in weight or size of fish in FISHstory photos, but the presentation slide for SEDAR 90 addresses some of that concern since there is not a shift upward. It is important to try to capture the range of what was caught on a trip rather than a single fish photo, and the mix of sizes cumulatively across photos should help address that concern.
  - It was noted that researchers at NC State are examining whether photos and HB logbooks can be used to develop an index of abundance.

4. Improving Communication with and Increasing Resilience of Fishing Communities in the South Atlantic Region

4.1. Document

- **Attachment 4**. Increasing Resilience of Fishing Communities introduction presentation

4.2. Overview

Part of the Council's Resilient Fisheries Initiative, this project would operationalize recommendations from East Coast scenario planning efforts by identifying communities that interact with Council-managed species in the South Atlantic region and beyond. The purpose is to identify and engage communities where outreach has been lacking in the past. This will improve the Council's understanding of constituent preferences for engagement and provide an opportunity to inform constituents about the Council process and improve their ability to become engaged. The proposed work would also describe community impacts from increasing environmental uncertainty. The SEP will receive an introduction to the project and a description of the work to be completed.

4.3. Presentation

Ed Camp, University of Florida
Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes, Georgia Southern University

4.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate. In general, this agenda item is meant to brief the SEP on a project that will be scheduled for detailed review at a future SEP meeting.

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- This is a very SEP-focused project, with several SEP members on the research team and several others on the project oversight team. As such, informal SEP feedback will be solicited and incorporated throughout the research process.
- SEP members recommended reaching out to the Federal and State staff to minimize duplicative work, as NMFS has various efforts that may overlap with this project, such as social indicators and identifying fishing infrastructure.

5. Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Economics

5.1. Documents

- **Attachment 5:** Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation economics presentation

5.2. Overview

The Council is in the process of developing a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the recreational snapper grouper fishery focusing on strategies to reduce the number of released fish to improve yield throughout the fishery. The management strategy will also consider the need for fishery access and resource use while preventing overfishing and rebuilding overfished stocks.

The MSE is focusing on red snapper, gag, black sea bass, and potentially other species to provide projections of landed and discarded fish under various scenarios modeling management changes to the recreational sector. As such, it is possible to add an economic component to these landings and discards streams that would allow the Council to make a comparison of estimated net economic benefits between various management scenarios to evaluate tradeoffs. Council direction to this point has been to evaluate the theoretical implementation of aggregate bag limits, mandatory stopping, seasonal management, and spatial management (closed and open areas) in the recreational snapper grouper fishery.

Staff have begun to develop methods that would allow this comparison, utilizing willingness to pay (WTP) estimates for harvesting and discarding the three original species identified for the MSE, which are red snapper, gag, and black sea bass. Specifically, staff are considering applying WTP estimates for harvested or discarded red snapper and gag provided in Carter and

Liese (2012)[1] and WTP estimates for harvested black sea bass provided in Haab et al (2010)[2]. Council staff will provide an overview of the initial methodology that is being developed for application within the MSE and ask for feedback from the SEP on these methods as well as for improvements that could potentially be implemented.

5.3. Presentation

John Hadley, SAMFC staff

5.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.

Discussion Questions:

1. The MSE can provide projected catches over several decades, thus discounting future benefits and costs will be necessary. Current federal guidance is to utilize a discount rate of 3% and 7% when conducting benefit-cost analysis. Does the SEP suggest an additional discount rate outside of this range that should be explored when examining the net present value of benefits and costs for the management scenarios in the MSE? If so, what discount rate and why?

2. Does the SEP know of alternative estimates of consumer surplus for harvested or discarded fish that should be used instead of those initially identified?
    a. Does the SEP know of consumer surplus estimates for released black sea bass?
    b. Could consumer surplus for non-groupers or red snapper be set a fraction of the consumer surplus for other species?

3. How would the SEP recommend determining that the conclusions are robust to the assumptions?
    a. It is important to note that we do not need a "perfect number" since we are examining which management scenario is performing better compared to the others based on a certain set of assumptions. Those assumptions can include a range to provide a sensitivity analysis.
4. Does the SEP have any comments on the general methods and assumptions that are being proposed to add an economic component to the MSE?
    c. Assumption 1: For discarded red snapper or gag, utilize a WTP estimate that is the average value between a bag limit and minimum size limit release value since it is unknown whether discards in the MSE model are due to minimum size, bag limit, or other reasons.
        i. Also utilize the fourth fish estimate for red snapper and gag since it is unknown how many fish may be discarded on a hypothetical trip in the MSE.

[1] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-Carter-40/publication/233843864_The_Economic_Value_of_Catching_and_Keeping_or_Releasing_Saltwater_Sport_Fish_in_the_Southeast_USA/links/56d0641108aeb52500cd7536/The-Economic-Value-of-Catching-and-Keeping-or-Releasing-Saltwater-Sport-Fish-in-the-Southeast-USA.pdf

[2] Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/46448189_Angler_Heterogeneity_and_the_Species-Specific_Demand_for_Marine_Recreational_Fishing

d. Assumption 2: Harvest and discards of these fish are considered a benefit and dead discards a cost.
    i. Since the size and disposition (harvest vs discard) of a dead discard that hypothetically could have otherwise survived to be caught in the fishery again is unknown, the average of the WTP estimates for harvest and discards may be utilized to apply a value to the dead discards.

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Discussion Question:** The MSE can provide projected catches over several decades, thus discounting future benefits and costs will be necessary. Current federal guidance is to utilize a discount rate of 3% and 7% when conducting benefit-cost analysis. Does the SEP suggest an additional discount rate outside of this range that should be explored when examining the net present value of benefits and costs for the management scenarios in the MSE? If so, what discount rate and why?
    - The SEP recommended 2%-3% based on the market yield of 10-year Treasury Inflation Protected Securities.

- **Discussion Question:** Does the SEP know of alternative estimates of consumer surplus for harvested or discarded fish that should be used instead of those initially identified?
    - The SEP suggested conducting a meta-analysis of different studies currently available.

- **Discussion Question:** Does the SEP know of consumer surplus estimates for released black sea bass?
    - There has been recent research at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute that looks at angler WTP for harvested and discarded fish. Among the species being explored is Black Sea Bass. The SEP shared a recent publication with Council staff and encouraged staff to explore the applicability and use of that study in the South Atlantic.

- **Discussion Question:** Could consumer surplus for non-groupers or red snapper be set a fraction of the consumer surplus for other species?
    - SEP suggested this decision would require the use of informed judgement based on the literature review suggested.
    - The SEP expressed concern that using WTP estimates to inform management strategy evaluation (MSE) can be problematic given that changes in fish population down the road could affect WTP estimates, which is assumed to be static.
    - For less popular fishes that have no WTP estimates available, the SEP agreed that some fraction of the WTP for more popular species would be prudent, and understands this would be a subjective process. As such, modeling ranges of WTP was suggested but noted that the process of determining WTP should be done in a fashion that can be consistent over time and replicable for future researchers.

- **Discussion Question:** How would the SEP recommend determining that the conclusions are robust to the assumptions? (*It is important to note that we do not need a "perfect number" since we are examining which management scenario is performing better compared to the others based on a certain set of assumptions. Those assumptions can include a range to provide a sensitivity analysis.)*

- The SEP suggested conducting a meta-analysis of studies currently available.

- **Discussion Question:** Does the SEP have any comments on the general methods and assumptions that are being proposed to add an economic component to the MSE?
  - The SEP expressed some concerns about estimating the value of discarded deaths outside of the year the death occurred. It was suggested that modelers could consider a fish a loss in the current year and cautioned trying to predict a future value for dead fish if they had survived. The SEP did not come to a consensus on whether to include current catch in future costs.

- **Assumption 1:** For discarded red snapper or gag, utilize a WTP estimate that is the average value between a bag limit and minimum size limit release value since it is unknown whether discards in the MSE model are due to minimum size, bag limit, or other reasons.
  - The SEP suggested to utilize the fourth fish estimate for red snapper and gag since it is unknown how many fish may be discarded on a hypothetical trip in the MSE.
  - SEP members suggested using historical MRIP data to look at discard data when biomass was at an equivalent level to try and determine where the estimate should be placed. This suggestion could potentially ground truth assumptions.
- **Assumption 2:** Harvest and discards of these fish are considered a benefit and dead discards a cost.
  - The SEP discussed that the size and disposition (harvest vs discard) of a dead discard that hypothetically could have otherwise survived to be caught in the fishery again is unknown (repeated catch in the catch and release fishery), the average of the WTP estimates for harvest and discards may be utilized to apply a value to the dead discards.

- Other Comments
  - The SEP expressed concern that static WTP estimates provided are now dated.
  - The SEP referenced a study that suggested WTP may not follow inflation and recommended Council staff to explore WTP estimates over time.
  - The dated estimates may be currently the best available science, and the SEP recognized updating WTP estimates can be expensive and time consuming.
  - SEP members suggested including a sensitivity analysis to help determine whether changes in WTP result in significant changes to the relative outcome (tie in with population size and biological parameters).
  - The SEP suggested looking at more recent revealed vs. stated preference literature (WTP is not always based on a rational economic choice).

6. Risk Value Matrix Introduction and Economic Value Analysis

6.1. Document

- **Attachment 6a**. Risk Value Matrix Introduction Presentation to SAFMC (March 2026)
- **Attachment 6b**. CCC Response to NMFS Risk Value Matrix (February 2026)
- **Attachment 6c**. Risk Value Matrix Economic Value Presentation

6.2. Overview

At the May 2025 CCC meeting NMFS discussed the need to "narrow the scope of NMFS management and science" to accommodate future agency resources and capabilities. In March 2026 the Council was provided with an update on progress by the SEFSC to further develop tools to assist decision making related to narrowing the scope of management. Additional information on management alternatives that could be considered for the risk/value categories was provided, along with progress on compiling the value and risk information necessary to assign stocks to risk/value categories. A national approach has been developed to support comparisons across regions. SEFSC staff will provide an overview of the risk value effort and details on the analyses being used to populate the economic data component of the priority matrix.

6.3. Presentation

David Carter, SEFSC staff

6.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.

Discussion Questions:

1) Envisioning this effort as a pilot to potentially further refine to help the Council prioritize species for ongoing management (annual catch limits, accountability measures, size limits, etc.) versus removing from federal management (removal from FMP or designated an ecosystem component species), are there ways that the economic component of the Risk-Value matrix could be improved?
    a. Are value added economic impacts a good metric to use as a proxy for economic importance of a species? If not, what readily available economic data or metric should be used instead?
    b. Are there other readily available economic data or metrics that should be used in addition to value added impacts?

2) Will results of the economic component of this effort, as designed, be useful in helping to guide decisions on the scope of science and management, such as revisiting or prioritizing species and complexes in need of assessments and federal management and resources allocated across fisheries and regions?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Discussion Question:** Envisioning this effort as a pilot to potentially further refine to help the Council prioritize species for ongoing management (annual catch limits, accountability measures, size limits, etc.) versus removing from federal management (removal from FMP or designated an ecosystem component species), are there ways that the economic component of the Risk-Value matrix could be improved?
    - **Discussion Question:** Are value added economic impacts a good metric to use as a proxy for economic importance of a species? If not, what readily available economic data or metric should be used instead?

- The SEP agreed that this could be a good indicator of the economic contribution to GDP, but need to think about what goes into that calculation, as a species heavily pursued by the charter industry is going to be elevated (species with more trips could have a lower value added, depending on the mode). Also, just using value added does not address substitutability between species. The economic impact is still there, but they may just be targeting other species.
- The SEP emphasizes there is also a need to consider angler welfare, which is somewhat captured in the social survey but only given a 20% weighting in the social score (and similar concerns with commercial).
    - The SEP notes that careful consideration needs to be given to weighting on economic contribution estimates vs social aspects, and consider how to interpret outcomes.

- **Discussion Questions:** Are there other readily available economic data or metrics that should be used in addition to value added impacts?
    - The SEP suggests consumer surplus or WTP but there are large gaps in that information, particularly on a species-basis, and noted movement away from surplus measures because of data limitations. Value added impacts were widely available nationwide.
    - SEP expressed concern about using value added given distribution of trips and ex vessel value, and that economic contribution analyses, estimated from input/output softwares, may be missing essential fishery context.

- The SEP requested to be involved in future discussions about and assignment of weights associated with social scores and economic value.

7. Understanding citizen scientists' experience with the SMILE Project (Size Matters: Innovative Length Estimates)

7.1. Document

- **Attachment 7a**. Understanding citizen scientists' experience with the SMILE Project report.
- **Attachment 7b**. Understanding citizen scientists' experience with the SMILE Project presentation.

7.2. Overview

Size matters – especially for fisheries! The SMILE Project (Size Matters: Innovative Length Estimates) is a citizen science project, led by the REEF Environmental Education Foundation (REEF) with support from SAFMC's Citizen Science Program. As part of this project, citizen scientists use innovative technology designed to obtain fish lengths, which ultimately contributes data for management and conservation of reef fishes. Snorkelers and divers are equipped with a low-cost, laser-mounted waterproof camera to obtain images of 12 target species (e.g., grouper, hogfish, parrotfish, snapper) that are then used to estimate fish length in post-analyses through AI and depth of field technologies.

A key component of citizen science projects is understanding who is likely to participate, what motivates their involvement, and the skills and knowledge they bring. This information is

essential for recruiting and retaining participants, particularly for specialized tasks that are critical to a project's success. In 2025, REEF collaborated with social scientists to develop a structured survey designed to identify the factors that may interest and motivate snorkelers and divers to engage with SMILE. The SEP will receive a presentation of survey results highlighting key findings and progress on this project.
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7.3. Presentation

Jennifer Loch, Allison Candelmo, Reef Environmental Education Foundation
Jessie Mader, Kaylin Clements, Jennifer Solomon, Colorado State University

7.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.

Discussion Questions:

1) Does the panel know of other projects, particularly marine-based citizen science initiatives using innovative and non–app-based technologies, that have reported similar findings?
    a. While we have perused peer-reviewed and widely available gray literature, we are especially interested in reports or materials that may be difficult to access.

2) Does the panel have recommendations on ways to help citizen scientists feel that their data are meaningful and actively informing management decisions?

3) What kinds of future social science research should REEF prioritize in relation to this project?
    a. Would it be preferable to conduct another user survey in the future, when we will have more citizen scientists who have engaged with the camera?
        i. Does the SEP have a suggested time interval between surveys?
    b. In your opinion, is informal user survey data collected internally by REEF (with no IRB approval) valuable? If so, for what use (participant engagement? Program review? Etc.)?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Discussion Question:** Does the panel know of other projects, particularly marine-based citizen science initiatives using innovative and non–app-based technologies, that have reported similar findings?
    - **Discussion Question:** While we have perused peer-reviewed and widely available gray literature, we are especially interested in reports or materials that may be difficult to access.
        - Open-source digital libraries of similar work that has been completed for the tech industry. Contextualize findings from other studies and apply to marine-based work.
        - Study by R. Bratton looking at freshwater water quality monitoring.
        - Lionfish rodeo results in the Gulf.

- **Discussion Question:** Does the panel have recommendations on ways to help citizen scientists feel that their data are meaningful and actively informing management decisions?
    - Explain the management process and the Council in the training materials.

- **Discussion Question:** What kinds of future social science research should REEF prioritize in relation to this project? Would it be preferable to conduct another user survey in the future, when we will have more citizen scientists who have engaged with the camera? Does the SEP have a suggested time interval between surveys?
    - Good opportunity to test out how recruitment may change based on how data is shared and recruitment methods evolve.
    - It would be good to see an updated survey.
        - Need to worry about surveying the same people. Dependent upon the researchers and how much data they can gather.
        - Seeing challenges in survey fatigue in FL.

- **Discussion Question:** In your opinion, is informal user survey data collected internally by REEF (with no IRB approval) valuable? If so, for what use (participant engagement? Program review? Etc.)?
    - Concern in fishing communities on sharing data. Whether IRB or not, needs to be clear how data are used and that there is informed consent from those willing to share information.
    - Informal survey may be good with getting general feedback

8. Risk Value Matrix Recap and Social Value Analysis

8.1. Documents

- **Attachment 8.** Risk Value Matrix Social Value Presentation

8.2. Overview

At the May 2025 CCC meeting NMFS discussed the need to "narrow the scope of NMFS management and science" to accommodate future agency resources and capabilities. In March 2026 the Council was provided with an update on progress by the SEFSC to further develop tools to assist decision making related to narrowing the scope of management. Additional information on management alternatives that could be considered for the risk/value categories was provided, along with progress on compiling the value and risk information necessary to assign stocks to risk/value categories. A national approach has been developed to support comparisons across regions. SEFSC staff will provide details on the analyses being used to populate the social data component of the priority matrix.

8.3. Presentation

Matt McPherson, SEFSC Staff

8.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.

Discussion Questions:

1) Do the scoring criteria adequately capture the range of social values for species in the South Atlantic region? Are the definitions of each criterion sufficient to capture the intended information?
    a. Does the survey adequately and fairly represent all relevant fishing sectors or are there any groups that are underrepresented or overlooked?

2) Are the species groupings used in the survey appropriate for a social value analysis or should other groupings be considered?

3) Are survey concepts distinct so that results are easy to interpret accurately or does the survey attempt to capture too many concepts at once?

4) After the pilot phase, what audience/sample frame does the SEP recommend for the survey?

5) Will results of the survey, as designed, be useful in helping to guide decisions on the scope of science and management, such as revisiting or prioritizing species and complexes in need of assessments and federal management and resources allocated across fisheries and regions?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The SEP strongly recommends that the development of this tool continue regardless of other developments on the economic and environmental components of the framework for narrowing scope.

- The SEP reinforces the need for a tool like this one that is being rapidly developed. They would like to see sufficient time and resources allowed to the Science Center to continue to work in this direction, as it holds great promise. Understanding that the criteria and pilot survey was developed and quickly developed under directive, the SEP offered some feedback to help shape future revisions, discussed below:

- SEP agrees that the groupings of the species are appropriate and the concepts are distinct. They, however, feel the design of the survey question regarding species group adds to the complexity of evaluating and responding appropriately to the survey. The SEP questioned if respondents have partial knowledge of some species in a particular group how you would parse out that species social value from the overall group out.

- The SEP had concerns on placing weights on the SVA categories and the potential implication of public facing documents having these weights. Additionally, the ranking/scale for social value of species is confusing as it could suggest that survey participants need to weigh one species against the other. It was cautioned by the SEP the presence of weights on the SVA categories might influence public opinion itself and/or have unintended consequences.

- The SEP noted the potential difficulty with respondents feeling they lack the expertise or knowledge to answer specific questions of the SVA. SEP recommends including a question about how confident respondents are in their responses to the survey to also account for respondents' knowledge about the species.

- The SEP confirmed the SVA survey instrument has a "don't know" space for questions respondents are unfamiliar with the social values of certain fisheries

- The SEP had reservations on the terminology used in the Social Value Approach (SVA) questionnaire, and noted that this survey metric is not qualitative, but rather ordinal since this is a quantitative survey from non-probability sampling of experts. The presenters/researchers acknowledged this terminology issue and will correct the presentation. However, because they still are qualitatively evaluating a fisheries importance from the survey results, they were regarding it as "qualitative".

- The SEP had concerns with species groupings presented in the SVA. Like the categories in thinking about fishing communities and what they mean. Worth keeping and working through the challenges because the information can eventually be very valuable.

9. Fishery Performance Report Text Analysis

9.1. Documents

- **Attachment 9a:** FPR Text Analysis Internal Documentation
- **Attachment 9b:** FPR Text Analysis External Documentation
- **Attachment 9c:** FPR Text Analysis Presentation

9.2. Overview

The purpose of fishery performance reports (FPR) is to assemble information from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) fishery advisory panel members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPRs are provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) to complement stock assessment reports and aid in developing stock status recommendations. Fishery performance reports are currently summarized as a narrative. In addition to the narrative, Council and SEDAR staff have developed a complementary report that utilizes automated text analysis to summarize key trends and themes found in the meeting minutes.

9.3. Presentation

Emily Ott, SEDAR staff
Christina Curtis, SAFMC staff

9.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.

Discussion Questions:

1) Who should determine the lexicon? (ex. Council? SEP? Advisory Panels?)

2) What additional text analyses should be explored?

3) Where should these results be presented? SSC? SEP? Council?

4) When should these results be presented during the SEDAR process? Data scoping? Data Workshop?

5) What are some future uses for these text analyses? Public comment?

6) What are some solutions to obstacles mentioned (AI algorithm bias, FPR standardized questions)?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In viewing the text analysis that had been completed, the SEP had questions about how correlations were calculated in R-Studio and how negative correlations were determined, i.e., if the calculations were based on how many times another theme was mentioned they would range from 0-1. For the analysis to find a negative, the program is obviously using something other than counts.

- The SEP expressed concern about the lexicon and sentiment analyses, particularly in how each analysis handles terms that could be both positive or negative depending on context. Developing a "lexicon" is tricky because a lot of words are value neutral until you consider the words around them (for example, "catching" doesn't necessarily mean anything negative or positive); they warned against words being coded as neutral and suggested defining some words as uncoded instead.

- The SEP notes that human-conducted qualitative data analysis is most preferable, but acknowledges that it is very time-costly and not possible with limited Council staff time. If using AI support, they recommend:
    - Consider breaking out comments on different topics when cleaning the data.
    - Explore how modifying the guardrails of the queries affects the analysis.
    - Looking into negative correlations seen in the matrices and the R code utilized.
    - Continuing to review and confirm themes using human analysis will be important, especially with possible value bias in an AI thematic analysis.

- Some members of the SEP suggested using Claude for thematic analysis, or to see what text analysis softwares are creating their own AI, and see what has been learned from initiatives at the SEFSC.
    - One member suggested investigating NotebookLM (free), can have up to 400 documents and has been used to do thematic analysis (private and does not pull information from elsewhere on the internet).

- The SEP noted that this analysis could be a great help for public comment and reporting back to help participants feel heard, similar to the ways that the Gulf Council seems to use their sentiment analysis. Additionally, AI could possibly summarize verbal public comments quickly after they are provided, which could also contribute to participants feeling heard.

10. Introduction to Social Science and Economics for Fishermen

10.1. Documents

- **Attachment 10:** Introduction to Social Science and Economics for Fishermen Outline

10.2. Overview

Council staff are developing an introductory presentation on the role of social science and economics in the fisheries management process. The presentation is intended for use during MREP workshops, Lines of Communication, and other outreach opportunities. The SEP is asked to review and provide feedback on the presentation outline, considering what core topics should be included, and how complex concepts can be communicated in a clear and practical way.

10.3. Presentation

Christina Curtis and John Hadley, SAFMC staff

10.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.

Discussion Questions:

1) Given the intended lay audience and limited presentation time, does the SEP suggest any additional topics or concepts that should be included in the presentation?

2) Is the material appropriate and accessible for fishermen? Does it properly convey why understanding social and economic analyses is important for fishermen? Does the SEP have any pointers on how to present complex topics?

3) Does it properly convey the value of social and economic information to the process and motivate participation in data collection efforts?

4) Are there any management examples or visuals that could strengthen this presentation?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Discussion Question:** Given the intended lay audience and limited presentation time, does the SEP suggest any additional topics or concepts that should be included in the presentation?
    - Drive home that their opinions matter and it filters into the management process.
    - Tie in that social science is not effectively voting. It shows how communities will be impacted and experience changes in management.
        - Weave in short stories, metaphors, and examples to help make information tangible.
            - Also visuals and videos
    - Compassionate humor

- **Discussion Question:** Is the material appropriate and accessible for fishermen? Does it properly convey why understanding social and economic analyses is important for fishermen? Does the SEP have any pointers on how to present complex topics?

- Get information in front of fishermen or focus group before using in MREP.
- The more interactive the better.
  - Minimize slides and maximize interaction.

- **Discussion Question:** Does it properly convey the value of social and economic information to the process and motivate participation in data collection efforts?
  - Convey that this is an opportunity for fishermen to provide information directly. Without their participation, data collection falls apart.
    - For biological information, can use fishery independent data. No equivalent social or economic information. Must be collected from fishermen and the fishery.
    - Highlight importance in gaps in data and that fishermen are integral in developing this information.
    - Lack of information impacts what is available to managers
  - In the long-run show that information (or lack thereof) can notably impact management decisions.
    - Troubleshooting reasons that management decisions can go wrong.
    - Acknowledge that fishermen have concerns with providing social and economic data.
      - Contextualize the information.
  - Have seen declines in fisherman participation over time in social sciences.
    - Tough to explain to the public that social and economic information is not on equal footing as the biology.
      - In MSA biology comes first.
        - Make clear that the MSA affects what social and economic information is shown to federal fishery managers.
  - Highlight how many mechanisms are in place to protect data and privacy (confidentiality)
  - Also explain that econ data can be used to show how to mitigate monetary or social effects of actions such as harvest cuts.
    - Biology is the "why" but social and econ and impact the "how"

- **Discussion Question:** Are there any management examples or visuals that could strengthen this presentation?
  - Go to the NOAA Voices page
  - Short clip of the audio to pull real-world examples from the Council discussion.

11. Other Business

Members discussed current open seats on the SEP and were encouraged to reach out to individuals who may be interested in being considered for appointment by the Council.

12. Report and Recommendations Review

13. Next SEP Meeting

20. APPENDIX B: BLACK SEA BASS TERMS OF REFERENCE (RECOMMENDED EDITS)

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston SC 29405
Call: (843) 571-4366 | Toll-Free: (866) SAFMC-10 | Fax: (843) 769-4520 | Connect: www.safmc.net

Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

SEDAR (TBD)
South Atlantic Black Sea Bass
Terms of Reference

DRAFT: 5/5/2026

1. Update the SEDAR 76 Update South Atlantic Black Sea Bass assessment model with data using a terminal year of 2025. Data providers may include preliminary or partial data for more recent years that could be used in the stock assessment model or projection analyses, with inclusion in the stock assessment model determined by the lead analyst based on the quantity and quality of the most recent data.
2. Incorporate the latest BAM model configurations and data calculation methods, detailing the changes made between the SEDAR 76 Update assessment model and the proposed assessment model. Provide a model run using the SEDAR 76 Update assessment configuration, including recent years' data (following NMFS Procedure 01-101-11).
3. Consider new and updated information on life history, natural mortality, discard mortality, the stock-recruit relationship, commercial and recreational landings and discards. Document any changes or corrections made and provide updated input data tables.
    a. Provide commercial, recreational, and combined landings and discards in pounds and numbers.
    b. Incorporate calibrated timeseries for recreational landings and discards from revised MRIP-FES estimates. Consider MRIP recommended approaches for recreational catch data to reduce PSEs below 50%.
    c. Consider available and any updated methods for estimating natural mortality. Consider estimation of natural mortality within the stock assessment model.
4. Evaluate and document the following specific changes in input data or deviations from the previous assessment model:
    a. Provide sensitivity analyses as needed to compare assessment results between new values in this assessment and values from the SEDAR 76 Update stock assessment model.
    b. Consider incorporating additional sources of information (e.g., ACCSP catch card project, etc.) to inform landings and discard selectivity specific to recreational fisheries.
    c. Consider the best method to estimate commercial discards, considering observer program and commercial discard logbook information.
    d. Evaluate differences in inshore versus offshore trends in landings and discards to make necessary adjustments to assessment results.

5. Update model parameter estimates and their variances, model uncertainties, estimates of stock status and management benchmarks, and provide the probability of overfishing occurring at specified future harvest and exploitation levels.

    a. Explore the use of recent recruitment with recruitment deviates instead of model-derived recruitment from the stock-recruit relationship. Determine an appropriate MSY proxy and timeseries for recruitment to be used in projections.
    b. Determine the best estimate to use as a management benchmark (e.g., direct estimate of MSY or a proxy). Include appropriate characterization of the uncertainty for the chosen management benchmark. If a proxy is chosen:
        i. Include sufficient justification for the decision to use a proxy.
        ii. Provide range of plausible proxy values and their associated uncertainties.
        iii. Provide run using the default proxy value or direct estimate of MSY (if available) as specified in the FMP.
    c. Provide F, yield, discards, biomass, SSB, and recruitment levels and associated uncertainty levels that correspond to MSY or its chosen proxy.

6. Compute short-term and long-term population projections as necessary to provide OFL estimates and ABC advice. Provide additional population projections as necessary to address overfishing or overfished stock conditions (e.g., rebuilding). Address as many of the recommendations as possible of the South Atlantic SSC Catch Level Projections workgroup outlined on page 16 of the final workgroup report found here.

7. Recommend SEFSC reach out to SSC members, industry representatives, and outside technical experts to meet via webinar or in person, as needed, to review model development and provide guidance.

8. Convene a review panel of SSC members and outside experts as necessary to review stock assessment.

9. Develop a stock assessment report to address these TORs and fully document the input data, methods, and results. Discuss assessment outcomes, primary uncertainties, and any problems encountered during the assessment process.

21. APPENDIX C: SSC APPOINTMENTS TO WORKGROUPS AND SEDAR

SEDAR Panel Membership

	Active
	Completed
	To Be Approved

Start Year	SEDAR Project	Assessment Component	Participant
2024/2025	**S94: FLK/EFL Hogfish**	Data	Steve Turner
	Schedule	Data	Marcel Reichert
	Terms of Reference	Assessment	Genny Nesslage
		Assessment	Steve Turner
	July 14-17 in Charleston	Review	Marcel Reichert
		Review	Alexei Sharov
2025	**S90: Red Snapper**	Data	Steve Turner
	Schedule	Data	Wally Bubley
	Terms of Reference	Data	Marcel Reichert
		Data	Anne Markwith
		Assessment	Luiz Barbieri
		Assessment	Jie Cao
		Assessment	Steve Turner
	Dec 14-18 in Beaufort, NC	Review (Chair)	Genny Nesslage
		Review	Chris Dumas
		Review	Alexei Sharov
2025	**S104: Dolphin MSE**	Review (Chair)	Matt Damiano
	July 28-31, 2026	Review Panel	Jeff Buckel
	Charleston, SC	Review Panel	Kelsey Roberts
2026	**S106: Gag Grouper**	TWG-ReproDynamics	Wally Bubley
		TWG-ReproDynamics	Fred Scharf
		TWG-ReproDynamics	Luiz Barbieri
2026	**SXXX: Black Sea Bass**	Review Panel	Steve Turner
		Review Panel	
		Review Panel	
2026	**King Mackerel**	Update	*not needed*
2027	**Spanish Mackerel**	Data (webinar)	Jim Gartland
		Data (webinar)	Jared Flowers
		Data (webinar)	Jeff Buckel
2027	**Red Grouper**	DW/Stock ID	
2027	**Snowy Grouper**	TWG-SADL	
2028	**Greater Amberjack**	DW/RW	

2028 **Red Porgy** TWG

2021	S68: Scamp - RT/OA	RT Review	Anne Lange
		RT Review	George Sedberry
		RT Review	Marcel Reichert
2021	S73: Red Snapper - OA	OA Review	Wally Bubley
		OA Review	Anne Lange
		OA Review	Jeff Buckel
		OA Review	George Sedberry
2021	S71: Gag Grouper - OA	OA Review	Wilson Laney
		OA Review	Scott Crosson
		OA Review	Anne Lange
2021	S66: Tilefish - OA	OA Review	George Sedberry
		OA Review	Genny Nesslage
		OA Review	Churchill Grimes
2021	S78: Spanish Mackerel - OA	OA Review	Dustin Addis
		OA Review	Wilson Laney
		OA Review	Fred Scharf
2022	S76: Black Sea Bass - OA	OA Review	Fred Serchuk
		OA Review	Chris Dumas
		OA Review	Alexei Sharov
2022	S82: Gray Triggerfish - RT	ADT	Jie Cao
		ADT	Wally Bubley
		RT Data - Chair	Wilson Laney
		RT Data - Participant	Jeff Buckel
		RT Assessment - Chair	*not needed*
		RT Review - Chair	Marcel Reichert
		RT Review - Reviewer	Anne Markwith
		RT Review - Reviewer	Alexei Sharov
2023	S86: Red Grouper - OA	*not needed*	*not needed*
2024	S89: Tilefish (Golden) - OA	Review	Wally Bubley
		Review	Marcel Reichert
2024	S79: FL FWC Mutton Snapper	Data	Steve Turner
		Data	Marcel Reichert
		Assessment	Jie Cao
		Assessment	Steve Turner
		Assessment	Fred Serchuk
		Review	Amy Schueller
		Review	Alexei Sharov

SSC Workgroups Membership

	Active
	Completed
	To Be Approved

START	SSC WORKGROUP		CURRENT MEMBERS
Ongoing	**Executive Committee**	**1**	Marcel Reichert (Chair)
		2	Wally Bubley (Vice Chair)
		3	Jeff Buckel (Past Chair)
		4	Jennifer Sweeney Tookes (SEP Chair)
Oct-2022	**SADL survey results**	**1**	Marcel Reichert (chair)
		2	Wally Bubley
		3	Fred Scharf
		4	Jie Cao
Aug-2024	**SCS8 Attendees**	**1**	Judd Curtis (SAFMC Staff)
		2	Jie Cao (SSC, case study presenter)
		3	Marcel Reichert (SSC)
		4	Kai Lorenzen (SSC)
		5	Andrew Ropicki (SEP, case study)
		6	Matt Damiano (SEFSC, case study)
Sep-2024	**Blueline Tilefish Sub-Group**	**1**	Jim Gartland
	(with Mid-Atl SSC)	**2**	Marcel Reichert
Jan-2026	**SARSRP CIE Review**	**1**	Marcel Reichert (Chair)
		2	Luiz Barbieri
Mar-2026	**Greater Amberjack Project**	**1**	Luiz Barbieri (Chair)
	Review Panel	**2**	Steve Turner
		3	Marcel Reichert
TBD	**Data Limited/**	**1**	Kai Lorenzen (chair)
	Unassessed Stocks	**2**	Wally Bubley
	(ABC-CR Category 4)	**3**	Amy Schueller
		4	Genny Nesslage
			SEFSC representative TBD
			Other outside experts TBD
Apr-2023	**Ecopath/Ecosim/Ecospace**	**1**	Alexei Sharov
		2	Marcel Reichert
		3	Wally Bubley
		4	Jared Flowers
Apr-2023	**Regime Shifts/Low Recruit**	**1**	Chris Dumas
		2	Marcel Reichert
		3	Jared Flowers
		4	CJ Schlick
Oct-2025	**Protected Species BiOp**	**1**	Jared Flowers
Nov-2025	**MSY Proxies**	**1**	Kai Lorenzen
	(Joint w/ Gulf)	**2**	Alexei Sharov
		3	Jie Cao
~~**Jan-2026**~~	~~**Assessment Technical Team**~~	~~**1**~~	~~Jim Gartland~~
		~~**2**~~	~~Genny Nesslage~~
		~~**3**~~	~~Jie Cao~~
		~~**4**~~	~~Steve Turner~~
		~~**5**~~	~~CJ Schlick~~
		~~**6**~~	~~Jennifer Sweeney Tookes~~
		~~**7**~~	~~Jeff Buckel~~
Apr-2026	**BLT Subcommittee**	**1**	Jim Gartland