SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE



SSC Meeting Overview April 27-29, May 3, 2021 Meeting via Webinar

> VERSION DRAFT April 13, 2021

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Documents:

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* Indicates documents not available for the Briefing Book. These will be distributed as they become available.

SAFMC PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Written comment:

Written comment on SSC agenda topics is provided to the Committee through an <u>online form</u>, similar to all other Council briefing materials. Written comment can be submitted at <u>this link</u>. For this meeting, the deadline for submission of written comment is 12:00 pm Monday, April 26, 2021.

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 before the SSC starts the discussion of the agenda topic. 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 as a series of webinars from April 27-29 and May 3, 2021. The entire meeting will be on a single webinar with its own link, available on the Council's website at <u>https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/scientific-and-statistical-committee-meetings/</u>.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Documents

Agenda

Attachment 1. Minutes of the October 2020 meeting Attachment 2. Minutes of the January 2021 meeting

- 1.2. Action
 - Introductions
 - Review and Approve Agenda
 - Approve Minutes

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

3. SEDAR 73 RED SNAPPER ASSESSMENT REVIEW

3.1. Documents

Attachment 3. SEDAR 73 Assessment Report Attachment 3a. SSC SEDAR 73 ABC Workgroup Report Attachment 4. SEDAR 73 Assessment Presentation*

3.2. Presentation

SEDAR 73 Assessment Overview: Dr. Kyle Shertzer, SEFSC

3.3. Overview

The Committee is asked to review the Red Snapper assessment prepared through the SEDAR 73 (Attachment 3), identify and characterize the impacts of assessment uncertainties, and provide fishing level recommendations. Red Snapper was last assessed in 2016 during SEDAR 41, where the stock was found to have been overfished and undergoing overfishing. A working group of the SSC met to provide preliminary feedback on potential pstar levels and projection scenarios that the SSC might want to consider when setting the ABC (Attachment 3a).

- 3.4. Public Comment
- 3.5. Breakout Groups
- 3.6. <u>Action</u>
 - Review assessment
 Does the assessment address the ToRs to the SSCs satisfaction?

- Does the assessment represent Best Scientific Information Available?
- Does the assessment provide an adequate basis for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations?
- Identify, summarize, and discuss assessment uncertainties
 - Review, summarize, and discuss the factors of this assessment that affect the reliability of estimates of stock status and fishing level recommendations.
 - Qualitatively characterize these factors in terms of their influence on assessment uncertainty and fishing level recommendations.
 - Review of the last assessment indicated there were significant uncertainties associated with released Red Snapper. Have the uncertainties associated with released fish changed, and if so, how have they changed and how does this affect the fishing level recommendations?
 - List the risks and describe potential consequences of assessment uncertainties with regard to status, fishing level recommendations, and future yield predictions.
 - Are methods of addressing uncertainty consistent with SSC expectations and the available information?
- Provide fishing level recommendations
 - The last assessment indicated the stock was overfished and overfishing was occurring. How has the stock status changed since the last assessment?
 - The stock is under a rebuilding plan. Is the stock responding as expected to the rebuilding plan? If not, comment on reasons why stock rebuilding is proceeding differently than predicted.
 - Discuss the appropriate recruitment scenario to project future fishing level recommendations. Should fishing level recommendations and management be based on the recent high recruitment?
 - Apply the ABC control rule and complete the fishing level recommendations table.
 - Comment on any difficulties encountered in applying the Control Rule, including any required information that is not available.
- Provide advice on monitoring the stock until the next assessment
 - What indicators or metrics should be monitored as an indicator of Red Snapper rebuilding?
- Provide research recommendations and guidance on the next assessment
 - Review the included research recommendations and indicate those most likely to reduce risk and uncertainty in the next assessment.
 - Provide any additional research recommendations the SSC believes will improve future stock assessments, evaluation of uncertainty, or application of the ABC Control Rule.
 - Provide guidance on the next assessment, addressing its timing and type.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

Table 1. Red Snapper Recommendations				
Criteria		Deterministic		Probabilistic
Overfished	evaluation			
(SSB/SSB _M				
Overfishing	evaluation			
MFMT (F _M				
SSB _{MSY} (U	nits)			
MSST (Uni	its)			
MSY (1000	lbs.)			
Y at 75% F	MSY (1000 lbs.)			
ABC Contr				
Adjustment	;			
P-Star				
М				
OFL RECO	MMENDATION	S		
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number
ABC RECO	OMMENDATION	[S	1	
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number

Table 1. Red Snapper Recommendations

4. SEDAR 66 TILEFISH ASSESSMENT REVIEW

4.1. Documents

Attachment 5. SEDAR 66 Assessment Report Attachment 6. SEDAR 66 Assessment Presentation*

4.2. Presentation

SEDAR 59 Assessment Overview: Dr. Nikolai Klibansky, SEFSC

4.3. <u>Overview</u>

The Committee is asked to review the Tilefish assessment prepared through SEDAR 66 and provide fishing level recommendations (Attachment 5). Tilefish was last assessed in 2016 during

the SEDAR 25 Update, where the stock was found to be undergoing overfishing but was not overfished.

- 4.4. Public Comment
- 4.5. Breakout Groups
- 4.6. <u>Action</u>
 - Review assessment
 - Does the assessment address the ToRs to the SSCs satisfaction?
 - Does the assessment represent Best Scientific Information Available?
 - Does the assessment provide an adequate basis for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations?
 - Identify, summarize, and discuss assessment uncertainties
 - Review, summarize, and discuss the factors of this assessment that affect the reliability of estimates of stock status and fishing level recommendations.
 - Qualitatively characterize these factors in terms of their influence on assessment uncertainty and fishing level recommendations.
 - List the risks and describe potential consequences of assessment uncertainties with regard to status, fishing level recommendations, and future yield predictions.
 - Are methods of addressing uncertainty consistent with SSC expectations and the available information?
 - Provide fishing level recommendations
 - Was past management successful in reducing F or ending overfishing? Comment on potential reasons for a change in stock status, if needed.
 - Apply the ABC control rule and complete the fishing level recommendations table.
 - The buffer between the OFL and ABC recommended by the SSC in 2016 for Tilefish was the largest buffer for an assessed species in the South Atlantic. Is the new buffer produced by the ABC Control Rule appropriate for this species and fishery?
 - Comment on any difficulties encountered in applying the Control Rule, including any required information that is not available.
 - Provide advice on monitoring the stock until the next assessment
 - What indicators or metrics should be used to monitor the stock until the next assessment?
 - Provide research recommendations and guidance on the next assessment
 - Review the included research recommendations and indicate those most likely to reduce risk and uncertainty in the next assessment.
 - Provide any additional research recommendations the SSC believes will improve future stock assessments.
 - Provide guidance on the next assessment, addressing its timing and type.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

r	e 2. Tilefish Recor		inistio	Probabilistic
Criteria Overfished evaluation		Deterministic		Prodadilistic
(SSB/SSB _{MSY)}				
Overfishing evaluation				
MFMT (F _N				
SSB _{MSY} (U	Inits)			
MSST (Un	its)			
MSY (100	0 lbs.)			
Y at 75% F	F _{MSY} (1000 lbs.)			
ABC Cont	rol Rule			
Adjustmen	t			
P-Star				
М				
OFL RECO	OMMENDATION	S		
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number
ABC REC	OMMENDATION	IS		
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number

Table 2. Tilefish Recommendations

5. COMPREHENSIVE ABC CONTROL RULE AMENDMENT

5.1. Documents

Attachment 7a. ABC CR Category 4 Stocks Workgroup Final Report Attachment 7b. ABC CR Category 4 Stocks Workgroup Presentation Attachment 8a. Draft Table 1 Landings Trends ABCs Unassessed Data Matrix Attachment 8b. Draft Table 2 Data Availability and Methods Matrices Updated Attachment 9. ABC CR Amendment Discussion Document Attachment 8. NMFS Guidance on Phase-Ins and Carry-Overs Attachment 9. ABC CR Amendment Presentation*

5.2. Presentation

Category 4 Stocks Presentation: Dr. Genny Nesslage, Workgroup Chair Carry-Over Presentation: Dr. Mike Schmidtke, SAFMC

5.3. <u>Overview</u>

The Council has resumed development of its comprehensive amendment to revise the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule, to address flexibility for phase-ins and carry-overs as allowed by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), and to address issues raised over the last few years by the SSC with the existing rule.

At the October 2020 meeting, the SSC reviewed comments they previously provided on the proposed alternatives for revising the ABC Control Rule, determining the acceptable risk of overfishing, determining the probability of rebuilding success for overfished stocks, and allowance of phase-ins of changes to the ABC. The SSC also provided additional comments on these topics and formed a Workgroup to investigate current literature on methods for determining ABC for stocks without data to support an assessment and their effectiveness and uncertainty. Such stocks would potentially be considered as Only Reliable Catch Stocks (ORCS) (under the current Control Rule) or Category 4 stocks under the SSC's recommended alternative. Results of this literature review and recommendations for deriving ABC for applicable stocks will be presented by the Workgroup Chair.

Since the October 2020 meeting, the Council has also directed staff to combine alternatives for the ABC Control Rule with complementary risk tolerance and rebuilding alternatives. Staff will review drafted changes.

The SSC has not yet reviewed or provided updated recommendations on the amendment's alternatives concerning carry-overs of unused portions of the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) since resumption of amendment development. Guidance on use of phase-in and carry-over provisions was published by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in July 2020 (Holland et al. 2020). Previous SSC comments supported carry-overs if applied to stocks that are neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing and have catch close to the ACL, among other factors described in the guidance document.

At this meeting, the SSC is asked to provide comments and recommendations on the ABC Control Rule as applied to ORCS and Category 4 stocks, as well as review and provide any updated recommendations on the revised (combined) ABC Control Rule alternatives and carry-overs. These recommendations will help the Council decide the range of feasible alternatives, and request analyses for the alternatives.

5.4. Public Comment

- 5.5. Breakout Groups
- 5.6. Action
 - Category 4 Stocks Workgroup
 - Review the findings of the Category 4 Stocks Workgroup.
 - Are these findings suitable for consideration in the Comprehensive ABC CR Amendment?
 - Recommend any needed edits or clarifications to the handling of unassessed/data-limited stocks in currently considered ABC Control Rule alternatives.

- Combined ABC Control Rule Alternatives
 - Does the SSC want to add to, revise, or remove any of the previously provided recommendations for Action 1?
- Carry-Over
 - Review previous recommendations and provide additional feedback on when carry-overs of unused ACL are allowable, also considering recent guidance from NMFS.
 - Are there recommendations on how precision of catch estimates should be considered with respect to carry-overs?
 - Is there a threshold of imprecision beyond which carry-over should not be allowed (e.g. no carry-over for stocks with a PSE greater than X)?
 - How should uncertainty of catch estimates be considered in determining the allowable carry-over amount?
 - Other considerations of catch uncertainty for carry-overs?

6. SOUTH ATLANTIC RESEARCH AND MONITORING PLAN REVIEW

6.1. Documents

Attachment 10. Draft 2022-2026 Research and Monitoring Plan

6.2. Overview

The Committee is provided an opportunity to review the research and monitoring plan. The Council will consider the research plan at its June 2021 meeting.

6.3. Public Comment

6.4. Action

• Review and provide comments and recommendations on the plan.

7. DOLPHIN WAHOO AMENDMENT 10

7.1. Documents

Attachment 11. Summary of DW Amendment 10 Attachment 12. Geometric Mean Information Paper Attachment 13. Summary of DW 10 and the Use of Geometric Mean Presentation

7.2. Presentation

Summary of DW 10 and the Use of Geometric Mean Presentation: John Hadley and Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC staff

7.3. Overview

Amendment 10 includes actions that incorporate updated catch level recommendations from the SSC and revise the ACLs for dolphin and wahoo accordingly (Attachment 13). The amendment also contains actions that consider various other management changes in the fishery including

revising recreational accountability measures (AMs); accommodating possession of dolphin and wahoo on vessels with trap, pot, or buoy gear onboard; removing the operator card requirement, reducing the recreational vessel limit for dolphin, reducing the recreational bag limit or implementing a recreational vessel limit for wahoo, and allowing filleting of dolphin at sea onboard for-hire vessels in the waters north of the Virginia/North Carolina border.

As part of the Council's review of recreational AMs, the Council has chosen to examine various measures that would trigger the need for an AM to go into place. Among these measures is the use of a three-year geometric mean in comparison to the ACL as one of the potential triggers. The Council has not used the geometric mean in the past to trigger AMs and will further explore this as a potential measure in Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 as well as potentially in other future amendments.

At this meeting, the primary request of the SSC is to comment on the Council's potential use of geometric mean as a trigger for AMs in the Dolphin Wahoo recreational fishery. To facilitate this discussion, Council staff will present a summary of a white paper covering the use and effects of geometric mean in comparison to arithmetic mean and point estimates (Attachments 14 and 15). Additionally, staff will present a general summary of all actions that the Council is considering in the amendment (Attachment 13), which the SSC is encouraged to comment on as appropriate.

7.4. Public Comment

7.5. <u>Action</u>

- Comment on the use of the geometric mean as a trigger for accountability measures in the Dolphin Wahoo recreational fishery.
 - Discuss risk associated with different methods to trigger accountability measures.
 - What diagnostics should be reviewed when deciding on an accountability trigger?
 - Are there stock or fishery conditions when a method for an accountability measure trigger is more appropriate?
- Review and comment on any other part of the amendment, as necessary.

8. SOCIOECONOMIC PANEL (SEP) REPORT

8.1. Documents

Attachment 14. 2021 SEP Report*

8.2. Presentation

SEP Report Overview: Dr. Scott Crosson, SEFSC

8.3. <u>Overview</u>

The SSC will be given an overview of the 2021 SEP report.

8.4. Public Comment

8.5. <u>Action</u>

• No action items.

9. ALLOCATIONS DECISION TREE REVIEW

9.1. Documents

Attachment 17. Allocations Decision Tree Attachment 18. Allocation Decision Tree Presentation

9.2. Presentation

Allocations Decision Tree Overview: Dr. Mike Schmidtke, SAFMC staff

9.3. Overview

Making sector allocation decisions is a difficult and complicated process. To help the Council incorporate other sources of information, in addition to landings, when making sector allocations, the Council is exploring the use of a Decision Tree Approach to help them determine salient issues when discussing sector allocations and develop an objective and organized approach to allocations (Attachment 17). At the September 2020 meeting, the Council endorsed the concept of the Decision Tree Approach and directed staff to work on developing the approach with input from its advisors. The Council did express concerns over establishing an approach that would be overly prescriptive in nature and wanted to maintain flexibility in allocation decisions on a species-by-species basis. As such, the approach design seeks to be informative in a methodical and objective manner without being prescriptive in the exact outcome that the Council is obligated to take in deciding allocations.

9.4. Public Comment

9.5. <u>Action</u>

Discuss and provide feedback on the draft Allocation Decision Tree Blueprint Document (Attachment 17), with a focus on draft decision tree questions and outcomes.

Discussion Questions:

- Landings
 - Are there additional landings-related questions or topics that should be covered in this portion of the decision tree approach? Are there questions that should be removed?
 - Does the SSC feel that the outlined landings data analyses are adequate? Are there other readily available analyses or factors that should be considered?

- Are the resulting recommendations from the landings tree appropriate? Are they clear enough to guide allocation decisions without being too prescriptive?
- <u>Stock Status</u>
 - Are there additional stock status-related questions or topics that should be covered in this portion of the decision tree approach? Are there questions that should be removed?
 - Does the SSC feel that the use of population indices (when available) in the absence of a stock assessment is appropriate? Are there other readily available analyses or factors that should be considered to inform allocations based on stock conditions, particularly for unassessed species?
 - Are the resulting recommendations from the stock status tree appropriate? Are they clear enough to guide allocation decisions without being too prescriptive?
- <u>Overall</u>
 - Given the overlap of some information that falls across multiple topics, such as landings or importance of a fishery to a given sector, does the SEP suggest the continued use of a "siloed approach" where the decision tree questions remain organized by subject (Social, Economic, Landings, and Stock Status) or should a more mixed approach be used where appropriate crossing multiple topics in one branch of the decision tree? For example, the overarching topic of Landings could be addressed using biologic, social, and economic questions.
 - Does the SSC feel that the use of a decision tree method as outlined would be useful for the Council to systematically and objectively examine allocations?
 - It is likely that the outcomes of working through the decision tree will vary by topic.
 - To provide the Council more conclusive guidance, should some topics be weighted more heavily than others? If so, which ones should be prioritized?
 - Would it be better to not provide a weighting to the topics and rely on a "majority rules" approach where each topic has equal ranking and the Council should consider allocation decisions based on net outcome of the topics. For example, if three of the five topics point towards additional allocation to the sector, the Council would be encouraged to prioritize additional ACL to that sector.

10. SEDAR 71 GAG ASSESSMENT REVIEW

10.1. Documents

Attachment 19. SEDAR 71 Assessment Report* Attachment 15. SEDAR 71 Assessment Presentation*

10.2. Presentation

SEDAR 71 Assessment Overview: Dr. Kevin Craig, SEFSC

10.3. Overview

The Committee is asked to review the Gag assessment prepared through SEDAR 71 (Attachment 19) and provide fishing level recommendations. Gag was last assessed during the 2014 Update to SEDAR 10, where the stock was found to be not overfished nor undergoing overfishing. However, overfishing had been occurring since 1980 and had just dipped below F_{MSY} in the terminal year. The SSB had been below MSST for the previous 5 years of the assessment but had risen above MSST in the last 2 years of the assessment.

10.4. Public Comment

10.5. Breakout Groups

10.6. <u>Action</u>

- Review assessment
 - Does the assessment address the ToRs to the SSCs satisfaction?
 - o Does the assessment represent Best Scientific Information Available?
 - Does the assessment provide an adequate basis for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations?
- Identify, summarize, and discuss assessment uncertainties
 - Review, summarize, and discuss the factors of this assessment that affect the reliability of estimates of stock status and fishing level recommendations.
 - Qualitatively characterize these factors in terms of their influence on assessment uncertainty and fishing level recommendations.
 - List the risks and describe potential consequences of assessment uncertainties with regard to status, fishing level recommendations, and future yield predictions.
 - Are methods of addressing uncertainty consistent with SSC expectations and the available information?
- Provide fishing level recommendations
 - The last assessment indicated the stock was close to management thresholds. Has the stock condition improved? Comment on potential reasons for a change in stock status, if needed.
 - Discuss the appropriate recruitment scenario to project future fishing level recommendations. Should fishing level recommendations and management be based on the recent low recruitment?
 - Apply the ABC control rule and complete the fishing level recommendations table.
 - Comment on any difficulties encountered in applying the Control Rule, including any required information that is not available.
- Provide advice on monitoring the stock until the next assessment

- What indicators or metrics should be used to monitor the stock until the next assessment?
- Provide research recommendations and guidance on the next assessment
 - Review the included research recommendations and indicate those most likely to reduce risk and uncertainty in the next assessment.
 - Provide any additional research recommendations the SSC believes will improve future stock assessments.
 - Provide guidance on the next assessment, addressing its timing and type.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

Criteria		Deterministic		Probabilistic
Overfished evaluation				
(SSB/SSB _N				
Overfishing	g evaluation			
MFMT (F _M				
SSB _{MSY} (U	nits)			
MSST (Un	its)			
MSY (100	0 lbs.)			
Y at 75% F	F _{MSY} (1000 lbs.)			
ABC Contr	rol Rule			
Adjustmen	t			
P-Star				
М				
OFL RECO	OMMENDATION	S		
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number
ABC REC	OMMENDATION	IS		
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number

Table 3. Gag Recommendations

11. OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 The Council Coordinating Committee's Scientific Coordination Subcommittee (National SSC) will have a meeting this summer (August) to discuss 1) incorporating ecosystem indicators into the stock assessment process, 2) developing information to support management of interacting species in consideration of ecosystem-based fishery management, and 3) how to assess and develop fishing level recommendations for species exhibiting distributional changes. The SSC is requested to provide potential case studies for the three topics. Dr. George Sedberry, SSC
- 11.2 Two SSC members are needed to serve as reviewers of SEDAR 68 Scamp Research Track Assessment. Although there two SSC members currently involved with the assessment, they cannot serve as reviewers of the assessment. The review workshop will occur in early October. – Chip Collier, SAFMC staff
- 11.3 FWRI will be holding workshops this summer to apply the EwE model to two scenarios recommended by the SSC at its October 2020 meeting: 1) What impacts may be expected on stocks in the snapper grouper complex from decreased discard mortality; and 2) What is the impact of high episodic recruitment of Red Snapper on the snapper grouper complex. The EwE Workgroup will be invited to attend the workshops and the SSC will be presented the findings from workshops in October 2021.

12. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

13. CONSENSUS STATEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW

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

The Final SSC report will be provided to the Council by 9 am on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 (approximately 3 weeks from the end of the meeting) for inclusion in the briefing book for the June Council meeting.

14. NEXT MEETINGS

14.1. SAFMC SSC MEETINGS

Potential 2021 Fall Meeting Dates

- October 25-27, 2021 in Charleston, SC
 - SEDAR 68 Scamp Research Track Assessment is scheduled for release on October 1

14.2. SAFMC Meetings

2021 Council Meetings June 14-18, 2021 webinar September 13-17, 2021 in Charleston, SC December 6-10, 2021 in Beaufort, NC

ADJOURN

LITERATURE CITED:

Holland, D., D. Lambert, E. Schnettler, R. Methot, M. Karp, K. Brewster-Geisz, J. Brodziak, S. Crosson, N. Farmer, K. Frens, J. Gasper, J. Hastie, P. Lynch, S. Matson, and E. Thunberg. 2020. National Standard 1 Technical Guidance for Designing, Evaluating, and Implementing Carry-over and Phase-in Provisions. NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-F/SPO-203, 41 p.