

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE



SSC Meeting Overview

FINAL - REVISED

February 9, 2024

Via Webinar

VERSION
FINAL- REVISED
2/6/2024

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

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SAFMC PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Written comment:

Written comments on SSC agenda topics are provided to the Committee through an online form, similar to all other Council briefing materials. Written comment can be submitted at [this link](#). For this meeting, the deadline for submission of written comment is 5:00 p.m., February 8, 2024.

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 via webinar. Online registration for the meeting can be found at the Council's website: <https://safmc.net/events/feb-2024-ssc-meeting/>

1. INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Documents

Attachment 1a. SSC February 2024 Agenda

Attachment 1b. Minutes from the Oct 2023 meeting

1.2 Action

- Introductions
- Review and approve agenda.
- Approve minutes from October 2023 meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

3. SEDAR 76: BLACK SEA BASS OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 Documents

*Attachment 3a. Black Sea Bass OA SEFSC Presentation - Revised

*Attachment 3b. Black Sea Bass OA Feb 2023 ABC-OFL Scenarios - Revised

Attachment 3c. Black Sea Bass OA Stock Assessment Report

*Attachment 3d. Black Sea Bass OA Addendum 1 Oct 2023

*Attachment 3e. Black Sea Bass OA Addendum 2 Oct 2023

3.2 Presentation

Dr. Matthew Vincent, SEFSC

3.3 Overview

The SEDAR 76 Black Sea Bass Operational Assessment was reviewed by the SSC at the April, July, and October 2023 meetings. Recommendations from the working group and SSC meeting reports have been integrated into the most recent assessment run and projections. The SSC should review the most recent projections (attachment 3b) and set catch levels based on the projections or other methodology if appropriate. These catch level recommendations will be made to the Council at their March 2024 meeting.

3.4 Public Comment

3.5 Action

- Review most recent projections and characterize uncertainties with the operational assessment.
- Set catch levels based on projections or other methodology and fill out Table 1. If projections from the assessment run are not used to set catch levels, provide justification for the alternate methodology.

Table 1. Black Sea Bass Catch Level Recommendations

Criteria		Deterministic		Probabilistic	
Overfished evaluation (SSB ₂₀₂₁ /MSST)		0.57		0.72	
Overfishing evaluation ($F_{2019-2021}/F_{40\%}$)		0.79		0.61	
MFMT ($F_{40\%}$)		1.18		1.28	
$B_{F40\%}$ (1000 lbs.)		17688.58		22071.29	
SSB _{F40%} (1000 lbs.)		8736.42		10219.24	
MSST (1000 lbs.)		5460.26		5807.19	
ABC Control Rule Adjustment		20%			
P-Star		30%			
SSC recommended $P_{Rebuild}$		70%			
M		0.375			
Generation Time		6 years			
OFL RECOMMENDATIONS					
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)	
2025					
2026					
2027					
2028					
2029					
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS					
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)	
2025					
2026					
2027					
2028					
2029					

4. SNAPPER GROUPEL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION

4.1 Documents

*Attachment 4a. Snapper Grouper MSE Presentation

4.2 Presentation

Dr. Adrian Hordyk and Dr. Tom Carruthers, Blue Matter Science

4.3 Overview

Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) is internationally recognized as best practice for evaluating the performance of alternative management approaches and identifying the mode of management that is most likely to meet the various management objectives of a fishery. The MSE process is designed to support evidence-based decision-making in the face of uncertainty on the status and dynamics of a fishery system. It was developed in response to a common situation where there were conflicting interpretations of a stock assessment process, and there was no clear path for making an informed and transparent management decision. In short, the MSE process involves building a range of models which span the key uncertainties in the fishery system and using computer simulations to evaluate the performance of alternative management methods against established management objectives.

Stakeholder participation is a fundamental component of the MSE process. Discussions with stakeholders are used to establish the three main areas of the MSE process: 1) Uncertainties in the Fishery System, 2) Feasible Management Options, and 3) Objectives for Evaluating Performance. Stakeholder input and feedback will be primarily obtained from the SAFMC Snapper-Grouper Advisory Panel.

The SSC is requested to review the updates made to the Snapper Grouper MSE, discuss potential uncertainties with the model framework and data inputs, and how these uncertainties may affect model performance. The SSC will have the opportunity to review the final operating models produced by the MSE process at a later meeting.

4.4 Public Comment

4.5 Action

- Provide feedback on the methods and potential uncertainties.

5. SEDAR: TERMS OF REFERENCE, SCHEDULES, AND PARTICIPANTS

5.1 Documents

- Attachment 5a. Red Snapper Terms of Reference
- Attachment 5b. Red Snapper Assessment Schedule
- Attachment 5c. Yellowtail Snapper Terms of Reference
- Attachment 5d. Yellowtail Snapper Assessment Schedule

5.2 Presentation

SAFMC/SEDAR Staff

5.3 Overview

The SSC will review the terms of reference, schedules, and select participants for the Red Snapper Assessment and Yellowtail Snapper Operational Assessment. The current Red Snapper assessment type is a research track assessment; however, a benchmark assessment may be more desirable to provide quicker management advice. The SSC should discuss which assessment type is most appropriate to meet both scientific and management needs.

5.4 Public Comment

5.5 Action

- Determine which assessment type for Red Snapper is most appropriate.
- Review and approve terms of reference and schedules for Red Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper.
- Select participants to participate in each phase of the Red Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper assessments.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

- Discussion of Tilefish/Blueline Tilefish assessments' process
- Citizen Science Survey Update
- SEDAR82: Gray Triggerfish RW Chair Appointment
- Chair and Vice-Chair Discussion
- Upcoming SSC Agenda Items (excel spreadsheet)

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public is provided one final opportunity to comment on SSC recommendations and agenda items. Electronically submitted comments can be viewed [here](#).

8. CONSENSUS STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

The draft SSC report will be provided to the Council at their March Council meeting. The final SSC report will be posted on the Council website two weeks following the end of this meeting (approximately Feb 23rd).

9. NEXT MEETINGS

9.1 Scientific and Statistical Committee Meetings

- April 15-16, 2024 in Charleston, SC (SEP)
- April 16-18, 2024 in Charleston, SC (SSC)
- July/Aug webinar (TBD)
- October 22-24, 2024 in Charleston, SC

9.2 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meetings

- March 4-8, 2024 in Jekyll Island, GA
- June 10-14, 2024 in Daytona, FL
- September 16-20, 2024 in Charleston, SC
- December 2-6, 2024 in Wrightsville Beach, NC

ADJOURN