

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**



**SSC Meeting Overview**

**July 28, 2021**

**Meeting via Webinar**

**VERSION**  
**July 13, 2021**

## CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION .....	5
2.	PUBLIC COMMENT .....	5
3.	SEDAR 73 RED SNAPPER ASSESSMENT PROJECTION REVIEW .....	5
4.	MANAGING ACLS FOR DATA-LIMITED STOCKS .....	7
5.	CATCH LEVEL PROJECTIONS BEST PRACTICES WORKGROUP .....	8
6.	OTHER BUSINESS .....	9
7.	PUBLIC COMMENT .....	9
8.	CONSENSUS STATEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW .....	10
9.	NEXT MEETINGS.....	10

## TABLES

Table 1. Red Snapper Recommendations .....	7
--	---

## **Documents:**

- Attachment 1. Minutes of the April and May 2021 meeting
- Attachment 2. SEDAR 73 Assessment Report
- Attachment 3. SEDAR 73 Working Paper 15 – Utility and Usage of Descending Devices in the Red Snapper Recreational Fishery in the South Atlantic
- Attachment 4. Presentation on Descending Device Usage\*
- Attachment 5. SEDAR 73 Revised Projections\*
- Attachment 6. SEDAR 73 Revised Projections Presentation\*
- Attachment 7. Managing the Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for Data-Limited Stocks in Federal Fishery Management Plans
- Attachment 8. Catch Level Projections Workgroup SoW

**\* 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 [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 pm Wednesday, July 28, 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 webinar from July 28, 2021. The entire meeting will be on a single webinar with its own link, available on the Council's website at <https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/scientific-and-statistical-committee-meetings/>.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Documents

Agenda

Attachment 1. Minutes of the April and May 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 PROJECTION REVIEW

### 3.1. Documents

Attachment 2. SEDAR 73 Assessment Report

Attachment 3. SEDAR 73 Working Paper 15 – Utility and Usage of Descending Devices in the Red Snapper Recreational Fishery in the South Atlantic

Attachment 4. Presentation on Descending Device Usage\*

Attachment 5. SEDAR 73 Revised Projections\*

Attachment 6. SEDAR 73 Revised Projections Presentation\*

### 3.2. Presentation

Descending Device Usage: Dr. Julie Vecchio, FWC

Projection Overview: Dr. Kyle Shertzer, SEFSC

### 3.3. Overview

The Committee reviewed the Operational Assessment for Red Snapper prepared through SEDAR 73 and accepted the assessment as best scientific information available at their April 2021 meeting. The base assessment suggested that the stock was overfished and overfishing was occurring in the terminal year of the assessment (2019). The Committee requested additional information prior to recommending catch levels. Specifically, the Committee requested a presentation on usage rates of descending devices when releasing Red Snapper and description of the methods used in the new two-step forecasting method for ABC-setting.

The usage rates for descending devices when releasing Red Snapper are likely to change due to the 2020 implementation of a requirement to have descending devices on-board when harvesting or possessing species in the Snapper Grouper complex when fishing in federal waters. A

working paper (SEDAR 73 WP 15, Attachments 3 and 4) was developed to estimate usage rate of descending device in SEDAR 73 and the SEDAR 73 Panel approved the estimates in the four different blocks.

The two-step forecasting method for ABC-setting was a new approach for projections presented to the Committee in April (Attachments 5 and 6). The Committee requested additional information because the methodology was not provided before the meeting for review. The two-step approach uses the current assessment conditions to compute the Frebuild and a second iterative step to increase landings  $F$  based on the reduction in discard  $F$  associated with descending device usage. The two-step approach has similar trajectories of SSB and total removals but shifts some removals associated with discards to landed catch.

The Committee also discussed different recruitment scenarios as requested by the Council during the March 2021 meeting. The Committee indicated it was not comfortable using the most recent high recruitment values (last 6 years) as the high recruitment might not continue into the future. The Council requested a recruitment option of the last 10 years be considered for use in setting fishing level recommendations. The Council selected a 10-year period because this timeframe has been used in other assessments in the Southeast US and it does not assume that changes in climate has been static over the past 60 years. Therefore, the more recent 10-year period might better represent future conditions over the short-term (10 years, rebuilding target year is 2044).

The Council also wishes to consider alternative reference points for Red Snapper and requested projection runs for several different scenarios of SPR including  $F_{max}$ ,  $F_{20\%}$ ,  $F_{25\%}$ ,  $F_{30\%}$ , and  $F_{40\%}$ . Instead of running full projections for all these scenarios and combinations, a request was made to describe the probability of overfishing and underfishing associated with different SPR levels to aid the Council's discussion of an appropriate  $F_{MSY}$  proxy for Red Snapper. A similar analysis was conducted for the SSC based on the results of SEDAR 41 (Red Snapper, provided in background material folder).

### 3.4. Public Comment

### 3.5. Breakout Groups

### 3.6. Action

- Review methods to estimate descending device usage rate
  - Discuss the working paper developed for SEDAR 73 and additional analysis conducted afterwards.
  - Provide justification if deviating from SEDAR 73 Panel recommendations.
- Provide fishing level recommendations
  - Discuss the alternative recruitment scenario requested by the Council to project future fishing level recommendations.
  - Discuss which recruitment scenario or scenarios are appropriate for use in setting the OFL and ABC.
  - 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 guidance to the Council on setting an appropriate SPR for Red Snapper
  - Review the analysis of alternative SPR levels provided.
  - Comment on the scientific risk associated with these SPR levels given the life history of the fish and assessment uncertainties.

## SSC RECOMMENDATION:

Table 1. Red Snapper Recommendations

Criteria	Deterministic		Probabilistic	
Overfished evaluation (SSB/SSB <sub>MSY</sub> )				
Overfishing evaluation				
MFMT (F <sub>MSY</sub> )				
SSB <sub>MSY</sub> (Units)				
MSST (Units)				
MSY (1000 lbs.)				
Y at 75% F <sub>MSY</sub> (1000 lbs.)				
ABC Control Rule Adjustment				
P-Star				
M				
OFL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed LBS	Discard LBS	Landed Number	Discard Number

## 4. Managing ACLs for Data-Limited Stocks

### 4.1. Documents

Attachment 7. Managing the Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for data-limited stocks in federal fishery management plans

#### 4.2. Presentation

Overview: Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC

#### 4.3. Overview

The Committee is asked to review guidance developed by NMFS regarding use of ACLs for data-limited stocks (Attachment 7). The guidance was developed in June 2021 and provided to the Councils for their review. The Council would like input from the Committee given their involvement in recommending ABCs, which are the basis for setting ACLs.

#### 4.4. Public Comment

#### 4.5. Action

- Review Guidance
  - Does the guidance adequately address issues for data-limited species in the South Atlantic region?
    - Species with no indices of abundance
    - Species with uncertain catch estimates (landings and bycatch)
    - Species with short seasons
    - Species with ABC set using decision tree

### **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

## **5. Catch Level Projections Workgroup**

#### 5.1. Documents

Attachment 8. Draft Catch Level Projections Workplan

#### 5.2. Presentation

Workplan: Dr. Genny Nesslage, SSC Chair

#### 5.3. Overview

The Committee requested development of a workgroup to develop guidance for catch level projections. The Council was in favor of the request. A workgroup needs to be formed and a workplan needs to be developed along with a scope of work. Attachment 8 is a draft scope of work for the workgroup. The goal is to have the recommendations completed and presented to the Committee by April 2022.

#### 5.4. Public Comment



### 5.5. Action

- Review Workplan and form workgroup
  - Provide guidance on the draft scope of work and timeline for the workgroup
  - Chair and volunteers are needed for the workgroup. The workgroup will not form without a chair.

## **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

The upcoming SEDAR 82 (Gray Triggerfish) research track is currently in the planning stages. The planning team has met and has created a draft schedule as well as a draft terms of reference. The Committee will receive these at the October 2021 meeting. Currently we are looking for volunteers to participate in the assessment, specifically we are looking for Assessment Development Team (ADT) members and chairs. The Council will be making appointments in December 2021.

- ADT members (up to 3):
  - Will need to be available for the entire Data and Assessment process from May 2022 – August 2023 with an in-person workshop September 2022.
  - ADT members need to have expertise with Gray Triggerfish or stock assessments.
  - ADT members will make the final decisions on recommendations for the research track model.
  - Members of the ADT cannot be involved in the review portion of the research track process.
- Chair positions (separate from ADT):
  - There are three Chair positions available for each step in the process (data, assessment, and review).
    - Data process dates: webinars held May 2022 – January 2023 with an in person workshop in September 2022
    - Assessment process dates: webinars held March 2023 – September 2023
    - Review process dates: mid-September – December 2023 with an in-person review workshop mid October 2023
  - Chair responsibilities include taking notes, facilitating discussions at webinars and meetings, and writing summaries and reports.
  - The Data and Assessment chair can be the same person if someone is willing to commit to both time commitments, or separate people if two people are interested.
  - The review chair should not be involved in the rest of the research track process.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

## **8. 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 Council staff by 9 am on Tuesday, August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 (approximately 3 weeks from the end of the meeting) for inclusion in the briefing book for the September Council meeting.

## **9. NEXT MEETINGS**

### **9.1. SAFMC SSC MEETINGS**

Potential 2021 Fall Meeting Dates

- October 27-29, 2021 in Charleston, SC

### **9.2. SAFMC Meetings**

2021 Council Meetings

September 13-17, 2021 in Charleston, SC

December 6-10, 2021 in Beaufort, NC

**ADJOURN**