**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGMENT COUNCIL**

**SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**



**SSC Meeting Overview**

**October 23 - 25, 2012**

**Crowne Plaza**

**North Charleston, SC**

**VERSION**

**Briefing Book Draft**

**PURPOSE**

Topics to address during this meeting:

* SEDAR 32 and 36 planning
* Review assessments of yellowtail snapper, red porgy, and vermilion snapper and provide fishing level recommendations
* Consider shrimp assessment possibilities
* Consider wreckfish analyses
* Review FMP Amendments including: CEBA 3, Shrimp 9, Snapper-Grouper 27 and 28, and Coastal Migratory Pelagics 19 and 20.
* Review Regulatory Amendments 13, 15, and 17.
* Recommend a P-rebuild for black sea bass
* Review draft Snapper-Grouper SAFE report
* Update on ORCS workshop
* Discuss stock prioritization
* Review a new approach to evaluate management uncertainty

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**\* Indicates documents not available for the first Briefing Book.**

**Note that Document 29 is provided to the SSC in Excel Spreadsheet format and as a pdf.**

**SAFMC PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS**

Written comment:

Written comment on SSC agenda topics is to be distributed to the Committee through the Council office, similar to all other Council briefing materials. Written comment to be considered by the SSC shall be provided to the Council office no later than one week prior to an SSC meeting. For this meeting, the deadline for submission of written comment is 12:00 pm Tuesday, October 16.

SAFMC

4055 Faber Place Drive

Suite 201

North Charleston, SC 29405

Verbal comment:

Two opportunities for comment on agenda items will be provided during SSC meetings. The first will be at the beginning of the meeting, and the second near the conclusion, when the SSC reviews its recommendations. Those wishing to comment should indicate such in the manner requested by the Chair, which may be through a show of hands or a written list if the number of interested parties is extensive, who will then recognize individuals to come forward and provide comment. All comments are part of the record of the meeting.

1. INTRODUCTION
   1. Documents

Agenda

Attachment . Minutes of the August 2012 meeting

* 1. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

Approve Minutes

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public will be provided two opportunities to comment on SSC agenda items during this meeting. The first at the start of the meeting, and the final will be provided at the end during the review of recommendations. Those wishing to make comment should indicate their desire to do so to the Committee Chair.

1. SEDAR ACTIVITIES
   1. Documents

Attachment . SEDAR project schedule

Attachment . SEDAR 32 TORs

Attachment . SEDAR 36 TORS and Schedule

Attachment . Black Sea Bass Update TORs

* 1. Overview

The SEDAR Steering Committee modified the 2013 assessment plan and developed preliminary projects for 2014.

The Council made appointments for SEDAR 32, South Atlantic blueline tilefish and gray triggerfish, at its September meeting. The Committee is asked to recommend an SSC member to Chair the review workshop. Assessment TORS are provided for review and comment.

SEDAR 36 will be a standard assessment of snowy grouper with a prolonged project schedule to allow the analysts ample time to bring the existing model up to current standards. A workshop will be incorporated in this standard assessment process. SSC representatives are desired to serve on the assessment panel.

A black sea bass update will be developed in early 2013 for presentation to the SSC in April 2013.

Table . SEDAR Assessment Projects for the South Atlantic, 2013-2017.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | Stocks | Status |
| 2013 | 1.Gray triggerfish B  2. Blueline Tile B  3. Snowy STD  4.Black Sea Bass U | Final |
| 2014 | 1. Red Snapper B  2.*Red porgy B*  3. Gag U  4. GAJ U | Preliminary |
| 2015 | 1. gray snapper B  2. Dolphin B  3. Wahoo B  4. Tilefish U  5. Red grouper U  Vermilion U?  Red Porgy U? | Tentative |
| 2016 | white grunt B  Speckled Hind B  Warsaw grouper B wreckfish B  Red Snapper U  Snowy U  Blueline U | Tentative |
| 2017 | Red Porgy U +  Black Sea Bass U (rebuild target 2016)  Gag U | Tentative |

* 1. Action
* Review and Comment on the current SEDAR assessment plan
* Identify a Review Panel Chair for SEDAR 32
* Approve SEDAR 32 TORS
* Approve SEDAR 36 TORS and Schedule
* Identify SSC participants for SEDAR 36
* Approve black sea bass TORs

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. SHRIMP ASSESSMENT APPROACHES
   1. Documents

Attachment . Gulf Pink Shrimp Assessment

* 1. Overview

Rick Hart of the SEFSC will brief the Committee on efforts to develop a stock synthesis based assessment of Gulf of Mexico shrimp.

* 1. Presentation

Shrimp Assessment Approaches: Rick Hart, SEFSC

* 1. Action
* Review and comment

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. P-REBUILD FOR BLACK SEA BASS
   1. Documents

Attachment . SEDAR 25 Black Sea Bass Assessment

* 1. Overview

The original rebuilding plan for black sea bass was based on a 50% probability of success. The SSC briefly discussed P-rebuild when the SEDAR 25 assessment was reviewed in November 2011 but a revised P-rebuild was not provided at that time. In Snapper-Grouper Amendment 18A, approved by the Council in December 2011, the Council specified that the rebuilding plan should have a 66% chance of success. Because the 66% chance of success was based on assessment evaluations of the status quo rebuilding program (fixed harvest of 847,000 pounds) (Table 3.20 in ), the Council requested that the SSC review the previous assessment and provide a P-rebuild recommendation.

* 1. Action
* Recommend a P-Star and P-rebuild for the SEDAR 25 assessment

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. VERMILION SNAPPER ASSESSMENT UPDATE
   1. Documents

Attachment . Vermilion Snapper Assessment Update

* 1. Presentation

Assessment Results: Kyle Shertzer, SEFSC

* 1. Overview

The SSC is asked to review an update assessment for vermilion snapper. The original benchmark was prepared in 2003 through SEDAR2 and last updated in 2007. Vermilion snapper were last determined to be neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing.

* 1. Action
* Provide Fishing Level Recommendations for vermilion snapper consistent with the ABC control rule.
* Provide guidance and advice on assessment uncertainties
* Comment on potential discarding issues
* Provide recommendations on the next assessment (type and timing)

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. RED PORGY ASSESSMENT UPDATE
   1. Documents

Attachment . Red Porgy Assessment Update

* 1. Presentation

Assessment Results: Lew Coggins, SEFSC

* 1. Overview

The SSC is asked to review an update of red porgy. The original benchmark was prepared through SEDAR1 in 2003 and updated in 2006. The stock is under a rebuilding plan.

* 1. Action
* Provide Fishing Level Recommendations for red porgy consistent with the ABC control rule.
* Provide guidance and advice on assessment uncertainties
* Comment on potential discarding issues
* Provide recommendations on the next assessment (type and timing)

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. WRECKFISH ANALYSIS
   1. Documents

Attachment . Wreckfish SCAA

Attachment . Wreckfish Analysis

* 1. Presentation

Wreckfish SCAA: Doug Butterworth

Wreckfish Analysis: TBD

* 1. Overview

Council was informed at its September 2012 meeting that additional analyses may be forthcoming for the wreckfish population. The SSC is asked to review any information that may be submitted

* 1. Action
* Review and comment
* Consider ABC implications

1. COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGIC AMENDMENT 19
   1. Documents

Attachment . CMP Amendment 19 Draft

* 1. Presentation

SEP Report: John Whitehead

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Kari MacLauchlin

Joint Mackerel Amendment 19 will address issues associated with bag limit sales of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia, including a potential new commercial permit requirement for cobia (commercial permits for king and Spanish mackerel currently exist). The primary concerns with bag limit sales are counting recreational sales toward the commercial quota, bag limit sales after a commercial closure, and the impact of recreationally caught fish on the market. Bag limit sales are prohibited for all other federally managed fisheries in the South Atlantic, but mackerel and cobia bag limit sales are common practice (and sources of income) for for-hire crew in some areas.

The amendment also considers actions to eliminate, or make non-transferable, latent king mackerel commerical permits; require compliance with federal regulations in state wateres for vessels with federal permits; and modifications to income requirements for king mackerel and Spanish mackerel commercial permits.

* 1. Schedule

NOI

Scoping Complete August 2012

Council reviews options & makes recommendations September 2012

SSC review October 2012

AP review April 2013

Council review & approve for Public Hearing December 2012

Public Hearings January 2013

SSC Final review April 2013

Final Review & Submission June 2013

Regulations implemented 2014

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on needs for effects analysis, specifically the economic analysis of prohibition on bag limit sales.

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGIC AMENDMENT 20
   1. Documents

Attachment . CMP Amendment 20 Draft

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Kari MacLauchlin

Joint Mackerel Amendment 20 will address issues associated with the boundaries and allocations. For Gulf group king mackerel, the amendment includes actions to change zone and sub-zone allocations, fishing seasons and commercial trip limits. There is also an action to establish transit provision for Florida Keys fishermen working on both Gulf and South Atlantic stocks. The amendment also includes consideration of a commercial quota for North Carolina king mackerel and Spanish mackerel; and an action to modify the fraemwork procedure to allow the Councils to make changes to ABCs, ABC/ACL control rules, and AMs through frameworks.

* 1. Schedule:

NOI

Scoping Complete August 2012

Council reviews options & makes recommendations September 2012

SSC review October 2012

AP review April 2013

Council review & approve for Public Hearing December 2012

Public Hearings January 2013

SSC Final review April 2013

Final Review & Submission June 2013

Regulations implemented 2014

* 1. Action

Review and comment on needs for effects analysis.

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. CEBA 3
   1. Documents

Attachment . CEBA

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Gregg Waugh / Anna Martin

In CE-BA 3, the Council is addressing improvements in data collection methods to better verify dealer reports to help ensure annual catch limit overages do not occur in South Atlantic fisheries.  CE-BA 3 would modify commercial and charter/headboat vessel reporting requirements and bycatch requirements to enhance data collection throughout the South Atlantic.  CE-BA 3 was approved for public scoping during the December 2011 Council meeting, and public hearings during the June 2012 Council meeting.  In June 2012 the Council took the measures out of CE-BA 3 that consider expanding Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) and establishing MPAs across the mid-shelf for speckled hind and Warsaw grouper.  The Council is scheduled to take final action on the data actions in CE-BA 3 during the December 2012 meeting.

* 1. CEBA-3 Schedule

NOI May 23, 2012

Scoping Complete January/February 2012

Council reviews options & makes recommendations March/June 2012

SSC review April 2012

APs review April/May 2012

Council review & approve for Public Hearing June 2012

Public Hearings August 2012

SSC Final review October 2012

Final Review & Submission December 2012

Regulations implemented 2013

* 1. SEP Report
  2. Action
* Review and comment on Actions

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. SNAPPER-GROUPER REGULATORY AMENDMENT 17
   1. Documents

Attachment . MPA evaluation & SH-WG regulatory effects

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Gregg Waugh & Roger Pugliese

This action addresses deepwater stocks.

* 1. Schedule:

NOI May 23, 2012

Scoping Complete February 2012

Council reviews options & makes recommendations March - December 2012

SSC review October 2012

APs review

Council review & approve for Public Hearing

Public Hearings

SSC Final review

Final Review & Submission

Regulations implemented

* 1. Presentations

Re-orientation of existing MPAs: Nick Farmer, SERO

Evaluation of the impact of existing regulations on landings and discard of speckled hind and Warsaw grouper : Nick Farmer, SERO

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on presentations and analyses.

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. SNAPPER-GROUPER REGULATORY AMENDMENT 13
   1. Documents

Attachment . RA13 Document

Attachment . MRIP Calibration Values

Attachment . MRIP Calibration Workshop Report

Attachment . MRIP Calibration Workgroup Report

Attachment . Post-Stratification Update

Attachment . Calibration Example

* 1. Presentations

MRIP Calibration approach and results: SERO TBD

SEP Report: John Whitehead

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Brian Cheuvront

This amendment updates allocations and ACLs for unassessed snapper grouper species based on updated MRIP numbers. The data for the updates are not yet available and hope to be ready in time for the SSC meeting. SERO will be presenting the methodology used for determining the updated values.

* 1. Schedule:

NOI None

Scoping Complete None

Council reviews options & makes recommendations September 2012

SSC review October 2012

APs review November 2012

Council review & approve for Public Hearing None

Public Hearings December 2012

SSC Final review None

Final Review & Submission December 2012

Regulations implemented 2013

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on the methodology used to update the allocation and ACL values. Identify issues that may result from changing these values.

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. SNAPPER-GROUPER REGULATORY AMENDMENT 15
   1. Documents

Attachment . RA15 Alternatives

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Myra Brouwer

This amendment adjusts the yellowtail ABC, ACLs, and ACT based on the latest stock assessment, modifies the fishing year and establishes a spawning season closure for yellowtail snapper; and modifies the Accountability Measure for gag grouper that prohibits harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers (red grouper, black grouper, scamp, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, red hind, rock hind, graysby and coney) when the gag ACL is met or projected to be met.

The SEFSC projected that commercial harvest of yellowtail snapper would meet the commercial ACL and issued a notice to close the fishery on September 11, 2012. Subsequently, a notification was issued that the fishery could remain open for additional time due to a miscalculation in the projections. Prior to this year, a closure of the yellowtail fishery had never occurred. Moreover, a stock assessment for that species was recently completed that indicated that the ACL could possibly increase. The Council wanted to move quickly to adjust the ACL for the commercial sector and thus minimize socio-economic impacts. The Council therefore requested that NMFS take action to adjust the commercial ACL for yellowtail via Emergency Rule. The latter would expire 180 days from its effective date, however. Regulatory Amendment 15 would make the ABC, ACLs and ACT adjustments permanent until modified. The action to modify the fishing year and establish a spawning season closure address recommendations from stakeholders.

The Comprehensive ACL Amendment established individual ACLs for black grouper and scamp and Amendment 24 did so for red grouper. In addition, the aggregate red grouper-black grouper-gag aggregate ACL was removed in Amendment 24. However, Amendment 16 had established an Accountability Measure to close the rest of the shallow-water groupers once the gag ACL was met or projected to be met in order to curb bycatch of gag. This regulation is still in effect and there is concern of significant socio-economic impacts, particularly from the closure of red grouper and black grouper. Since these species (and scamp) now have their own ACLs, the Council is proposing removing (or modifying) the AM that closes all shallow-water grouper when the gag ACL is met.

* 1. Schedule:

NOI none

Scoping Complete none

Council reviews options & makes recommendations December 2012

SSC review October 2012

APs review November 2012

Council review & approve for Public Hearing December 2012

Public Hearings December 2012

SSC Final review

Final Review & Submission December 2012

Regulations implemented Spring 2013

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on preliminary analyses for each action

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. SNAPPER-GROUPER AMENDMENT 27
   1. Documents

Attachment . Amendment 27 Summary

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Myra Brouwer

This amendment would address management jurisdiction for yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, and Nassau grouper. Both the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils manage these species in their respective jurisdictions. However, in 2010, the Gulf Council expressed a desire to transfer management responsibility to the South Atlantic Council for these three species throughout their range in the southeast U.S. Actions in this amendment would transfer management authority and address permitting and management issues for yellowtail and mutton snapper. Also, because sector allocations for yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper were specified only for the South Atlantic using Boyles’ Law and South Atlantic landings, the allocations would have to be re-calculated to include landings from the Gulf of Mexico to allow the South Atlantic Council to establish sector allocations that extend into the Gulf of Mexico.

The amendment would also include an action to modify the snapper grouper framework process. The intent is to add language to the framework to accomplish adjustments to the ABC, ACLs, and ACTs in a more timely manner.

Finally, the amendment includes an action to address issues with the harvest of blue runner in the mackerel gillnet fishery. The Council was recently made aware that blue runner are incidentally caught by fishermen targeting Spanish mackerel off northeast Florida. Fishermen have been selling their catch of blue runner to federally-permitted dealers. However, blue runner are included in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management unit and a snapper grouper unlimited permit or a 225 permit are required to harvest and sell them. Hence, mackerel fishermen have been harvesting and selling blue runner without possessing the required permit. According to public input, the sale of blue runner can make up to 30% of a fisherman’s income. The Council is considering actions in this amendment that would continue to allow mackerel fishermen to harvest and sell blue runner.

* 1. Schedule:

NOI not yet known whether this amendment will be an EIS

Scoping Complete n/a

Council reviews options & makes recommendations December 2012

SSC review October 2012

APs review November 2012

Council review & approve for Public Hearing December 2012

Public Hearings January 2013

SSC Final review ???

Final Review & Submission March 2013

Regulations implemented Summer/Fall2013

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on preliminary analyses for each action

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

1. SNAPPER-GROUPER AMENDMENT 28
   1. Documents

Attachment . Amendment 28 Alternatives

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Myra Brouwer

This amendment would establish regulations to allow harvest of red snapper in the South Atlantic.

Red snapper harvest in 2012 was allowed for two consecutive weekends (Fri-Sun) in for the recreational sector and during a 7-day mini-season for the commercial sector. NMFS took action via an Emergency Rule to implement these measures, so no provisions for allowing harvest in 2013 (and beyond) are currently in place. The document contains alternatives to calculate the red snapper ACL and establish a process for continuing to allow limited harvest of red snapper in the future..

* 1. Schedule:

NOI none required for regulatory amendments

Scoping Complete none required for regulatory amendments

Council reviews options & makes recommendations December 2012

SSC review October 2012

APs review November 2012

Council review & approve for Public Hearing December 2012

Public Hearings December 2012

SSC Final review ??

Final Review & Submission December 2012

Regulations implemented Spring 2013

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on preliminary analyses for each action

1. OTHER AMENDMENTS AND ACTIONS
   1. Documents
   2. Overview

Numerous amendments are in development for consideration by the Council in 2013. The SSC will be provided greater detail at the next meeting in April. At this meeting the Committee will be briefed on the actions, their timing, and be provided an opportunity to provide feedback on alternatives and analyses that could be considered by the Committee at a later meeting.

* 1. Snapper-Grouper Amendment 26
     1. Topic

This amendment would address adjustments to ABCs for unassessed species based on SSC recommendations from application of the ORCS methodology. The amendment would also address any adjustments to sector allocations.

* + 1. Timing

To be determined in June 2013.

* 1. Snapper-Grouper RA 14
     1. Topic

The amendment would address management measures for several snapper grouper species. Proposed actions include:

* Amberjack – fishing year & reduce trip limit
* Mutton snapper – additional protection during spawning season
* Gray triggerfish – change size limit measurement from Total Length (TL) to Fork Length (FL)
* Black sea bass fishing year (recreational and commercial) and adjustments based on update assessment and new P\* analyses
* Vermilion snapper – modify commercial trip limit and recreational bag limit; adjust start of 2nd commercial season; modify recreational closed season
* Hogfish – increase the minimum size limit
* Red porgy – modify recreational bag limit and commercial head count
* Modify aggregate grouper bag limit
  + 1. Timing

Options will be presented to the Council at the March 2013 meeting. Approve for public hearings at June 2013 meeting, public hearings in August 2013 and final Council approval September 2013.

* 1. Snapper-Grouper Amendment 22
     1. Topic

At the September 2012 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment to implement a recreational tag program for red snapper and deepwater snapper grouper species (golden tilefish, snowy grouper and wreckfish).

* + 1. Timing

Options will be presented to the Council in June 2013 or September 2013

* + 1. SEP Report
  1. Mackerel Framework
     1. Topic

This amendment includes actions to change the minimum size limit for Atlantic Group king mackerel; adjust the commercial trip limit in the Florida East Coast Sub-zone for Atlantic Group king mackerel; create an exemption to the size limit for Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel gillnets in August and September; and allow a portion of a third net in the Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel gillnet fishery.

* + 1. Timing

The Council will review actions and alternatives in March 2013; approve for public hearings in June 2013; and submit for final approval in September or December 2013.

* + 1. SEP Report

1. SAFE REPORT
   1. Documents

Attachment . DRAFT Snapper Grouper SAFE Report

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: Mike Errigo

The Committee is offered for review a draft Snapper-Grouper SAFE report including data through 2011.

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on content and approach.
* Provide additional information as appropriate, especially pertaining to developing issues or ongoing research.

1. SSC ORCS WORKSHOP
   1. Documents

Attachment . ORCS WORKSHOP REPORT

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: John Carmichael

The SSC held a workshop in August 2012 to apply the ORCS approach to SAFMC stocks. Considerable progress was made but the Committee was unable to proceed fully through the process. A second workshop will be held in conjunction with the April 2013 SSC meeting. The progress report from August 2012 is provided for review and comment.

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on the ORCS progress report
* Provide guidance for the April ORCS workshop

1. STOCK PRIORITIZATION
   1. Documents

None

* 1. Overview

Staff Contact: John Carmichael

During discussion of the Research and Monitoring Plan in April 2012 the Committee requested adding a discussion of stock prioritization approaches to the agenda for this meeting. Committee recommendations can be considered during development of the 2013 research plan.

* 1. Action
* Provide guidance on stock prioritization

1. MANAGEMENT UNCERTAINTY EVALUATION
   1. Documents

Attachment . Report

* 1. Presentation

Management Uncertainty Evaluation: Katelin Shugart-Schmidt

* 1. Overview

A student of SSC member Jim Berkson recently completed a project exploring methods to evaluate management uncertainty. Findings are presented for SSC information and discussion

* 1. Action
* Review and comment on management uncertainty evaluations.

1. COUNCIL WORKPLAN UPDATE
   1. Documents

Attachment . SAFMC Follow-up, September 2012

Attachment . SAFMC FMP Timeline, September 2012

* 1. Overview

The Committee is provided several documents that detail Council work plans and priorities.

* + 1. Coastal Migratory Pelagic - Kari MacLauchlin
    2. Corals - Anna Martin
    3. Fishery Ecosystem Plan - Roger Pugliese
    4. Snapper Grouper - Myra Brouwer
    5. Spiny Lobster
    6. Golden Crab - Brian Cheuvront

1. OTHER BUSINESS

Additional SEP Items Report: John Whitehead

1. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW, PUBLIC COMMENT

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

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

The Final SSC report should be provided to the Council by November 9 for inclusion in the Council's Briefing Book to be finalized November 13 at 9 a.m.

1. NEXT MEETINGS
   1. 2013 SAFMC SSC MEETINGS

April 9-11, 2013: Charleston

April 9: Continuation of ORCS Workshop

October 22-24, 2013: Charleston

* 1. SAFMC Meetings

2013 Council Meetings

March 4-8, 2013: St. Simons Island, GA

June 10-14, 2013: Stuart, FL

September 16-20, 2013: Charleston, SC

December 2-6, 2013: Wilmington, NC

1. ADJOURN