

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE



**SSC Meeting Report
October 13-15, 2020
Meeting via Webinar**

**VERSION
FINAL
November 13, 2020**

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SAFMC PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

Written comment:

Written comment on SSC agenda topics was 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 was 12:00 pm Tuesday, October 6, 2020. Submit written comments to:

SAFMC – SSC Comments
4055 Faber Place Drive
Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Verbal comment:

Two opportunities for comment on agenda items were provided at set times during SSC meetings. The first was at the beginning of the meeting, and the second near the conclusion. Those wishing to comment indicated such in the manner requested by the Chair, who then recognized individuals to provide comment.

An opportunity for comment on specific agenda items was also provided as each item came up for discussion. Comments were generally taken after all the initial presentations are given and before the SSC started the discussion of the agenda topic. As before, those wishing to comment indicated such in the manner requested by the Chair, who then recognized individuals to provide comment. All comments are part of the record of the meeting. See meeting minutes.

Meeting Format:

Given the rapidly evolving situation with the outbreak of COVID-19 and potential health risks, this meeting was held as a series of webinars from October 13-15.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Documents

Agenda

- ❖ *Approved by Committee with addition of item to discuss the new payment method under Other Business.*

Attachment 1. Minutes of the April 2020 meeting

- ❖ *Approved by Committee*

1.2. Action

- Introductions
- Review and Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public was provided an opportunity to comment on SSC agenda items as they were discussed during the meeting. See meeting minutes.

3. SEDAR ACTIVITIES

3.1. Documents

Attachment 2. Blueline Tilefish ToRs

Attachment 3. Red Grouper ToRs

Attachment 4. Vermilion Snapper ToRs

3.2. Overview

Kathleen Howington presented on the Draft Terms of Reference for the 2022 assessments of Blueline Tilefish, Red Grouper, and Vermilion Snapper.

3.3. Public Comment

See meeting minutes.

3.4. Action

- General:
 - ❖ *The SSC recommends a meeting be held to standardize methods for addressing anticipated data limitations of 2020/2021 and beyond given sampling and survey disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The SSC noted that the terminal year of some assessments may need to change from what is specified in the ToRs. The SSC recommends the SEDAR assessment schedule be modified if there are inadequate 2020/2021 data for a particular species.*

- ❖ *The SSC would welcome briefings on the impacts of COVID-19 on monitoring and assessments for South Atlantic stocks.*
- ❖ *The SSC recommends standardizing Operational Assessment ToRs in the future as the definition of an Operational Assessment settles.*
- **Blueline Tilefish**
 - Approve Terms of Reference.
 - ❖ *The SSC recommends the following modifications to the Blueline Tilefish ToRs to reflect the need to vet new data, properly account for uncertainty in MRIP estimates (particularly for rare event species), and respond to data collection issues that have arisen due to the COVID-19 pandemic:*
 1. *Remove ToRs 5 and 6 and incorporate them into ToR 2. Modify ToR 2 to read as follows: “Consider new and updated information on life history, discard mortality, commercial and recreational landings and discards. Note any particular concerns or problems with data collected in 2020 and beyond. Document any changes or corrections made and provide updated input data tables. Provide commercial and recreational landings and discards in pounds and numbers.”*
 2. *Add a sentence to ToR3 to examine the impact of distributional assumptions made when incorporating MRIP data into assessment. Modify ToR 3 to read as follows: “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. Investigate asymmetric distributions for incorporating MRIP parameters.”*
 3. *Add an additional ToR that reads: “Examine and describe impacts on model performance and estimates of the data limitations in 2020 and beyond.”*
 - ❖ *The SSC noted that data-limited methods used in SEDAR 50 were not mentioned in the 2022 ToRs. If the Council wishes these analyses be repeated, the SSC recommends adding a ToR to that effect.*
 - ❖ *The SSC noted that this is the first time the revised MRIP estimates will be used in the Blueline Tilefish assessment. Therefore, the Center and the Council should be prepared for any potential road bumps that may be encountered with the incorporation of these revised estimates.*
 - ❖ ***SSC approved the 2022 Blueline Tilefish ToRs as modified.***
 - **Red Grouper**
 - Approve Terms of Reference.
 - ❖ *The SSC requests the full suite of projections from the previous assessment be repeated in the 2022 assessment.*

- ❖ *The SSC recommends that modifications #1-3 made to the Blueline Tilefish ToRs (above) also be made to the Red Grouper ToRs with the addition that steepness be included in ToR2. This change would involve wrapping Red Grouper ToRs 4-6 into ToR 2 as follows: “Consider new and updated information on life history, steepness, discard mortality, commercial and recreational landings and discards. Note any particular concerns or problems with data collected in 2020 and beyond. Document any changes or corrections made and provide updated input data tables. Provide commercial and recreational landings and discards in pounds and numbers.”*
- ❖ ***The SSC approved the 2022 Red Grouper ToRs as modified.***
- Vermilion Snapper
 - Approve Terms of Reference.
 - ❖ *The SSC recommends that modifications made to the Red Grouper ToRs (above) also be made to the Vermillion Snapper ToRs with the exception that no changes be made to ToR 3.*
 - ❖ ***The SSC approves the 2022 Vermillion Snapper ToRs as modified.***

Table 1. Current SEDAR projects and those planned but not yet scheduled, with SSC participants where applicable.

Plan Year	SEDAR #: Type	Stock	Terminal Data	Assessment Complete	SSC Participants
2020	68: RT	Scamp, Gulf + SA	2017	Summer 2021	DW & AW & RW: Churchill Grimes, Marcel Reichert, Alexei Sharov
	U	Snowy Grouper	2018	Fall 2020	No participants due to this assessment being an update.
	71: OA	Gag	2019	Spring 2021	Wilson Laney Scott Crosson Anne Lange
	66: OA	golden Tilefish	2018	Spring 2021	George Sedberry, Genny Nessler, Churchill Grimes
	73: OA	Red Snapper	2019	Spring 2021	Anne Lange, Jeff Buckel, George Sedberry
2021	68: OA	Scamp, Gulf + SA	2020	Early 2022	TBD
	B	Mutton Snapper	TBD	Mid 2022	TBD
	78: OA	Spanish Mackerel	TBD	Early 2022	Dustin Addis, Wilson Laney, Fred Scharf
	76: OA	Black Sea Bass	TBD	2022	Fred Serchuk, Chris Dumas, Alexei Sharov
2022	OA	Blueline Tilefish	TBD	TBD	TBD
	OA	Red Grouper	TBD	TBD	TBD
	OA	Vermilion Snapper	TBD	TBD	TBD
	RT	Gray Triggerfish	TBD	2024	TBD

4. UPDATE ON NEW DATA IN THE SEDAR 73 RED SNAPPER ASSESSMENT

4.1. Documents

Attachment 5. No Attachment

4.2. Overview

The SSC was briefed on the proposed plan to conduct a preliminary review of the selectivity workshop report (evaluating the selectivity of trap, hook and line, and camera gear in relation to one another) and new data sources selected for use in the SEDAR 73 (South Atlantic Red

Snapper) assessment at a webinar in early 2021. The Snowy Grouper update assessment will be reviewed on that webinar as well.

4.3. Public Comment

See meeting minutes.

4.4. Action

- No action required.

5. **REVIEW OF THE KING MACKEREL LENGTH MEASUREMENT METHODOLOGY FROM THE FISHSTORY PROJECT**

5.1. Documents

Attachment 6. FISHstory length analysis for Oct SSC Meeting
Attachment 7. FISHstory length analysis presentation

5.2. Presentation

FISHstory length analysis presentation: Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC

5.3. Overview

Historic photos from the for-hire recreational fishery are an untapped source of potential biological data for years prior to dedicated catch monitoring programs. The SAFMC Citizen Science Program has developed the FISHstory Project which includes three major components: digitizing historic photographs, describing species composition in the photographs, and developing a technique to measure fish in the photographs and estimate length distribution. The SSC was requested to review the techniques to estimate the length distribution from the photographs.

5.4. Public Comment

See meeting minutes.

5.5. Action

- Review the methodology
 - ❖ *The SSC generally supports the use of this methodology but recommends exploring its use for other species and expanding the spatial and temporal extent of photos examined.*
 - ❖ *The following comments are directly related to measuring King Mackerel. If this program is expanded to include other species, there may be issues of bias that may need to be addressed (e.g., smaller fish placed in wheelbarrows, only trophy fish hung on board, etc.).*

- Is this methodology appropriate to use for measuring fish in pictures?
 - ❖ *The SSC deems this methodology appropriate for use in measuring fish within pictures, with some suggestions below.*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommends reexamining the relationship between true and predicted length with different scalars without fitting the regression line through the origin given that could bias the R^2 value and slope.*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommends trying to obtain size information from fish that are obscured in the photo by measuring body parts (e.g., head length, fin length, distance from snout to preopercle) and using morphometric equations in the literature to estimate fish length. Morphometric equations could also be derived from images of whole fish in the photographs.*
- Can a reliable size composition of catch be derived using this methodology?
 - ❖ *Yes, the SSC agreed that a reliable size composition for landings of King Mackerel can be derived using this methodology given this specific image resolution. However, the SSC noted there are uncertainties associated with the spatial and temporal extent of these photos. The SSC noted this uncertainty will be more of an issue as the method is applied to other species; there is less uncertainty associated with the spatial extent of King Mackerel represented in these photos given their highly migratory nature.*
 - ❖ *The SSC thought this methodology would be useful in informing historical age/size classes in years close to the beginning of the assessment time period.*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended that, when this information is ready to be used, a topical working group be formed to address the uncertainties mentioned above and determine how best to incorporate these length distribution estimates into the assessment.*
- Does the methodology adequately address uncertainty for the size composition?
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended using Goodman's equation to estimate the variance of 2-3 measurers.*
 - ❖ *The SSC also recommended comparing the variance in these measurements with the variance of measurements obtained from current methods such as electronic measuring boards.*

6. SOUTH ATLANTIC ECOPATH WITH ECOSIM MODEL REVIEW

6.1. Documents

Attachment 8. EwE Model Review Workgroup Report

Attachment 9. Presentation on SA EwE Model

Attachment 10. Presentation on SSC Workgroup Review

Attachment 11. Presentation on Application of Ecopath, Ecosim and EcoSpace

Attachment 12. EwE Background Materials

6.2. Presentation

Introduction: Roger Pugliese, SAFMC

SA EwE Ecosystem Model: Lauren Gentry, FWRI

EwE Model Review Workgroup Overview: Dr. Yan Li, Workgroup Chair

Application of Ecopath, Ecosim and EcoSpace: Luke McEachron, FWRI

6.3. Overview

A new generation Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) model has been developed to provide an evaluation tool for the SSC and the Council. This new South Atlantic model was developed through regional partners to refine links between the SAFMC FEP II and other regional conservation planning efforts. During the October 2019 meeting, an SSC EwE Model Review Workgroup (WG) comprised of selected members of the SSC was established. The WG was charged with providing a review of the South Atlantic Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) model. The review was guided by the Terms of Reference developed by the WG with the balanced and functioning SA EwE model available in advance of the initial Ecopath Model Review Workgroup Webinar. The WG reviewed the vulnerability analyses; and reviewed and edited the draft report. An overview was provided on applications of an EwE model and capabilities afforded by the developing EcoSpace component.

6.4. Public Comment

See meeting minutes.

6.5. Action

- Review the EwE model, considering the review done by the WG.
 - ❖ *The SSC noted that model performance and outcomes may change when the current model configuration changes (e.g. if functional groups or fleets are aggregated or disaggregated).*
 - ❖ *The SSC approved the statements and recommendations in the WG report with modifications to ToR 2.1.3 as follows:*
 - *The WG agreed with keeping 19 fleets in the model as having discrete fleets allows for landings to be mapped with high spatial resolution in EcoSpace and also allows discard mortality to be specified by gear type.*
 - *The WG agreed that sufficient catches exist for each of the 19 fleets included in the model.*
 - *The number of fleets can be adjusted to address specific management questions.*
 - ❖ *The SSC approved the statements and recommendations in the WG report with modifications to ToR 2.1.6 as follows:*

- *Estimates including food web characteristics and diet overlaps from the base Ecopath model are suitable to inform and complement stock assessment and fisheries management.*
- *The WG emphasized that the base Ecopath model will serve as a living tool to complement stock assessment and fisheries management. The model will be updated and improved as new data become available and the model is modified.*
- *Ecopath is well developed. As a tool it is ready to be modified to address specific assessment and management questions. The SSC would like to review final pre-balance diagnostics (e.g., biomass vs. trophic levels, production/consumption/respiration) and other Ecopath outputs (e.g. Mixed Trophic Impacts, Network Indices).*
- ❖ *The SSC approved the statements and recommendations in the WG report with modifications to ToR 2.2.1 c and d as follows:*
 - *Fishery independent data (SEAMAP, SERFS trap) were used to generate relative biomass time series but were not used in a traditional stock assessment fashion as tuning indices.*
 - *No fishery dependent data were used to generate relative biomass time series.*
- ❖ *The SSC approved the statements and recommendations in the WG report with modifications to ToR 2.2.3 as follows:*
 - *Index standardization methods were used by data providers before passing the indices to the modeling team to be used in the EwE model as fishery independent relative biomass time series. These standardization methods were not reviewed by the WG.*
- ❖ *The SSC approved the statements and recommendations in the WG report with modifications to ToR 2.2.4 as follows:*
 - *Several of the initial input parameters deal with how predators and prey interact.*
 - *With minor adjustments to the above-mentioned parameters, the SSC approves initial parameterization of the pre-calibrated Ecosim model.*
- ❖ *The SSC approved the statements and recommendations in the WG report with modifications to ToR 2.2.7 as follows:*
 - *The SSC agrees with the WG conclusion regarding the utility of the current form of the EwE model as a base model.*
 - *The SSC recommends that any application of the EwE model to inform specific assessment or science to support catch level recommendations go through the SEDAR process.*

- *One of the EwE model’s applications and its underlying components (EcoSpecies repository) is that it can help evaluate the impact of single species management goals on the broader ecosystem.*
 - *One of the EwE model’s applications is in evaluating potential impacts of management actions, or to inform analysts of potential interactions as assessment models are developed. The SSC has cautioned during previous reviews of Ecopath with Ecosim that it is important to not portray such models as “the” answer to all management concerns. This is a tool that should be used in conjunction with assessment modeling and the assessment scientists’ understanding of both the species and the fisheries involved.*
- Identify, summarize, and discuss uncertainties and limitations of the analysis.
 - ❖ *Several uncertainties and limitations are outlined above and in the WG report.*
 - ❖ *The SSC noted that EwE base model development is complete. Fine-tuning is an ongoing process based on the question being asked. The SSC cannot review goodness of fit until the vulnerability parameters are defined for the primary groups of interest which will be determined by the question being asked.*
- Has the performance of the model been tested in the South Atlantic region?
 - ❖ *The SSC recommends a performance evaluation and validation study of the predictability of the model be conducted based on retrospective data fit to a specific set of ecosystem important species.*
- How can the model be used to influence or inform management action (Broad)?
 - ❖ *The SSC did not have time to address this question in full. However, the WG report identifies a suite of potential applications such as management strategy evaluations, informing multi-species management and ecosystem-based management, testing hypotheses related to trophic interactions, and evaluating parameter uncertainties at an ecosystem scale (see response to ToR 2.2.7).*
- How can the model be applied to a fisheries management problem of a Council, Commission, or similar body (Region-Specific)?
 - ❖ *As mentioned above, the WG report identifies a suite of potential applications such as management strategy evaluations, informing multi-species management and ecosystem-based management, testing hypotheses related to trophic interactions, and evaluating parameter uncertainties at an ecosystem scale (see response to ToR 2.2.7).*
 - ❖ *The SSC did not have time to adequately address this question in full. However, the SSC did discuss that EwE may be useful in helping to address questions about why recruitment failed for a particular species or why a species did not meet its rebuilding target (e.g., red porgy, red snapper).*

- To what extent can the EwE model, in its current state of development, be used to evaluate the following South Atlantic management questions, and does the SSC consider the current input dataset adequate to yield reliable results that could be considered BSIA for any of these questions (Comment on readiness of model vs. data components):
 1. Continued poor recruitment in shallow water groupers, Red Porgy, and possibly other species
 2. Impact of climate change on species distributions and fisheries
 3. Impact of an episodic extremely high Red Snapper recruitment event on the Red Snapper stock, fishery, and other species in the Snapper Grouper complex
 4. Benefits to fish stocks from decreases in discard mortality through best practices (SG RA29)
 - Rank the above questions in order of feasibility to be accomplished by October 2021.
- ❖ *The SSC did not have time to adequately address this question in full. However, the SSC did solicit the advice of the modeling team with regard to relative readiness of the model to address each of the questions listed above. The modeling team suggested that the above questions be ranked (highest to lowest) in the order 3, 4, 1, 2.*

EcoSpace

- Are spatial data available in the South Atlantic region adequate to develop a reliable and robust EcoSpace model?
 - *The SSC did not have time to address this question.*
- What additional questions can be answered for the South Atlantic region by incorporating EcoSpace?
 - *Although the SSC did not have time to adequately address this question in full, several possibilities were discussed, including (but not limited to):*
 - *Shifts in distribution of Blueline Tilefish and Black Sea Bass*
 - *Climate change issues*
- How much additional development time and data will be necessary to expand the model to incorporate EcoSpace?
 - *The SSC did not have time to address this question.*

Wrap up

- Consider establishing a standing ecosystem model workgroup to help with future updates and developments including the development of Ecospace.
 - ❖ *The SSC agreed with the WG's recommendation that a standing ecosystem model workgroup be created. The following SSC members volunteered: Yan Li, Eric Johnson, Alexei Sharov, and George Sedberry. Participation of outside experts was requested as well. The following experts were*

recommended by the SSC: Dave Chagaris, Marcel Reichert, Howard Townsend, Laurent Chaubris, Kim de Mutsert, and Kristy Lewis.

7. COMPREHENSIVE ABC CONTROL RULE AMENDMENT

7.1. Documents

- Attachment 13. ORCS Final Report
- Attachment 14. ORCS Analysis
- Attachment 15. Carruthers et al. Data Limited Methods Review and SSC Discussion
- Attachment 16. ABC CR Amendment
- Attachment 17. Current ABC CR
- Attachment 18. P* Examples
- Attachment 19. Risk Score Document
- Attachment 20. NMFS Guidance on Phase-Ins and Carry-Overs
- Attachment 21. Phase-In and Carry-Over Presentation

7.2. Presentation

- ORCS and Risk Analysis Presentation: Dr. Mike Errigo, SAFMC
- Phase-In and Carry-Over Presentation: Dr. Mike Schmidtke, SAFMC

7.3. Overview

The Council is resuming development of a comprehensive amendment to revise the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule, to address flexibility 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 their October 2019 and April 2020 meetings, the SSC commented on the uncertainty associated with the Only Reliable Catch Stocks (ORCS, Attachment 13) methodology to assign ABCs for unassessed stocks. Carruthers et al. 2014 (Attachment 15) suggested the ORCS approach, and other catch-based approaches to assigning ABC values, may lead to a higher probability of overfishing and therefore may not be appropriate methods to use for setting ABC values. The SSC expressed a desire to revisit the ORCS approach in order to better understand how it operates and potentially make adjustments to the approach.

The SSC last reviewed the ABC Control Rule Amendment in April 2019. At this meeting, the SSC reviewed a method for setting the P* value that split the analysis into components of scientific uncertainty (evaluated by the SSC) and risk (evaluated by the Council). The risk level involves the risk of overfishing (determined by a complex analysis of attributes for each stock) and the status of the stock. The scientific uncertainty and risk level each give a penalty that is subtracted from 50% (which determines the OFL) to derive the P* value (which determines the ABC). The SSC recommended that the risk of overfishing for a species should increase proportionally by the number of unknown attributes within a risk category and the risk level should default to “high” when all the attributes for a category are unknown. The SSC would have the flexibility to deviate from this default where justifiable. The SSC also recommended that life history characteristics be considered in evaluating initial risk scores. The SSC requested additional information from Council

staff, including a comparison of P* values for assessed species using the current and proposed ABC Control Rule methods.

Previous SSC recommendations are highlighted in the most recent draft of the amendment (Attachment 16). Council staff has developed the requested P* comparison (Attachment 18). Additionally, Council staff previously developed a preliminary application of the risk tolerance determination process (Attachment 19).

Guidance on use of phase-in and carry-over provisions was published by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in July 2020 (Attachment 20), which are also addressed in this amendment. The SSC previously supported the use of phase-ins for stocks above their Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST; i.e., those that are not overfished). The SSC also previously supported carry-overs if applied to stocks that are neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing and have catch close to the Annual Catch Limit (ACL), among other factors described in the document (Attachment 16).

At this meeting, the SSC was asked to provide comments on the actions included the amendment. Previous SSC recommendations on the actions are provided in the discussion of each action and are highlighted in the document provided for review (Attachment 16). These recommendations help the Council decide the range of feasible alternatives, request analyses for the alternatives, and select appropriate preferred alternatives.

7.4. Public Comment

See meeting minutes.

7.5. Action

- ❖ *The SSC recommends formation of a Category 4 WG to:*
 - *carefully explore SSC procedures and the most recent literature examining performance of landings-only approaches, including, but not limited to, ORCS;*
 - *recommend potential biological and fishery characteristics (e.g. bycatch vs. directed) that would suggest the use of alternative data poor approaches;*
 - *consider, if available and adequate, effort, length, and fishery independent data;*
 - *examine correlations in landings across species, geographic location, and fisheries (e.g., recreational and commercial) at a given point in time;*
 - *make a recommendation to the SSC for a revised Decision Tree for Category 4 of the ABC CR.*
- ❖ *The following SSC members and Council staff volunteered to serve on the WG: Wilson Laney, Chris Dumas, Eric Johnson, Amy Schueller, Alexei Sharov, and Mike Schmidtke. Participation of outside experts was*

requested as well, specifically people with expertise in data-limited approaches either from the SEFSC or other organizations.

- ORCS
 - Are the assumptions of the Carruthers paper being met in the South Atlantic fisheries using ORCS? Which stocks does the study apply to?
 - ❖ *Some of the stocks being evaluated using ORCS in the South Atlantic are bycatch-only and/or rarely encountered in the surveys, attributes which are not reflected in the stock used in the Carruthers simulation study.*
 - Is there any evidence that stocks managed by ABCs based on the ORCS method have experienced overfishing, become overfished, or show any other signs of declining stock status?
 - ❖ *With the exception of a few stocks with relative abundance indices, most stocks managed using ORCS (i.e., with only landings trends) have no information on population trends to determine if these stocks are overfished or experiencing overfishing; therefore, this question cannot be adequately addressed in the South Atlantic.*
 - ❖ *There is flexibility to deviate from ORCS if the SSC feels a stock has a concerning trend or life history trait, as was previously done for Scamp and Hogfish.*
- Risk Analysis
 - Review the P* comparison and provide feedback on implications of this comparison for the new ABC Control Rule methodology.
 - ❖ *The SSC determined this methodology appears reasonable and seems to be performing as anticipated.*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended that numbers in Council table should be presented as percentages, not decimals).*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended that the supporting tables be clearly explained in the associated documentation. Specifically, details should be included as to how numbers from one table feed into calculations in other tables. Also, it should be clearly stated that calculations are based on a default P* value of 0.5.*
 - Review the document describing Risk Score calculation (Attachment 19) and provide feedback on potential use of this calculation moving forward.
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended that all associated documentation make clear that socioeconomic attributes reflect long-term impacts to the fishery.*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended that short-term socioeconomic impacts be distinguished from long-term impacts and assessed.*
 - ❖ *The SSC highlighted the need to clarify exactly what is meant by short vs. long-term socioeconomic impacts. Given the information presented at this time, the SSC was unable to make recommendations on the definitions of these terms. Possible definitions might include:*

- *Short-term: time until reference point is achieved. Long-term: time after reference point is achieved (for overfished/overfishing stocks).*
- *Short-term: time ABC is in effect. Long-term: time after that (for healthy stocks)*
- *The SSC notes that the definition may vary by fishery depending on fishery size and incentives.*
- ❖ *The SSC recommended that clear written explanation and documentation accompany the risk analysis table.*
- ❖ *The SSC recommended no penalty for unknown attributes. However, the SSC raised the concern that negative incentives for data collection may be created when there are no penalties for missing attributes.*
- ❖ *The SSC recommended a default of “moderate” for species with no attribute scores in a particular category.*
- ❖ *The SSC recommended exploring the option to scale scoring by standard deviations from the mean risk score.*
- Phase-In
 - Review previous recommendations and provide further feedback on when phase-ins should/should not be allowed, also considering recent guidance from NMFS.
 - ❖ *The SSC noted there is greater uncertainty as projections extend beyond the terminal year; therefore, it may be necessary to phase in more or less of the decrease in the second year than the first due to the increase in uncertainty. The length of the phase-in period should be considered in the context of the projection time period.*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended allowing the use of phase-ins for ABC increases as well as decreases.*
 - Should allowable phase-in time periods be tied to relative biomass levels, uncertainty, or stock characteristics?
 - ❖ *The SSC agreed that all 3 aspects be considered when determining phase-ins. The SSC also recommended considering recruitment, biomass trends, uncertainty in biomass, etc.*
 - ❖ *The SSC noted that either a substantial decrease or increase in biomass may warrant a phase-in of the ABC.*
 - ❖ *The SSC noted that large increases or decreases in supply may affect price and profitability. The Council may wish to consider the elasticity of price for fisheries when setting the buffer between ABC and ACL.*
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended lifespan or generation time be considered when determining phase-ins.*

- Should the SSC provide recommendations on allowable phase-in time periods?
 - ❖ *Yes, the SSC would appreciate the opportunity to provide biological and socioeconomic information regarding phase-ins as well as phase-in time periods.*
- Carry-Over
 - Review previous recommendations and further feedback on when carry-overs are allowable, also considering recent guidance from NMFS.
 - ❖ *The NMFS guidance states that ACLs underages can already be carried over into the next year's ACL as long as that revised ACL does not exceed the next year's ABC, but the SSC notes that the Council does not currently have buffers between the ABC and ACL for most species. This will limit the Council's options.*
 - ❖ *The SSC will have to consider whether a carryover that requires an increase in the ABC will result in overfishing, which will in turn depend on the existing buffer between the ABC and OFL. Smaller buffers will mean that carryover options are more limited. Any changes to the ABC must account for scientific uncertainty per NSI guidelines and the Council's risk policy.*
 - ❖ *The SSC requested the opportunity to review the issue of carry-overs more carefully at a future meeting but noted that the Committee still agreed with their previous existing recommendations on this issue.*
 - Should allowable carry-over amounts be determined by relative biomass levels, risk, or fishery characteristics?
 - ❖ *The SSC did not have time to address this question.*

8. COUNCIL WORKPLAN UPDATE

8.1. Documents

Attachment 22. SAFMC Work Plan, September 2020

Attachment 23. SAFMC Amendments Overview, September 2020

8.2. Overview

These documents are provided at each meeting to keep the Committee informed of Council activities. Regular detailed reviews of each amendment are no longer requested of the SSC as amendments are developed; instead the Committee is asked to comment on specific technical items that may arise. However, members are welcome to review any ongoing amendments and to provide comments and suggestions directly to staff. Current versions of each amendment are included in the Council Briefing Books distributed to SSC members. Questions or comments about specific items should be addressed to the staff assigned to each FMP, as summarized below. Items with a question mark next to them do not currently have an assigned staff member in charge of them due to the shuffling around of positions within the office this year. An assignment will be made when the vacant tech staff position is filled.

There is also a table below (Table 2) which lists all the active SSC workgroups and their members. There is currently only the Ecopath Model Review Workgroup that is active, but it should have finished its charge by the time this meeting occurs.

- Coral Amendment 10 (Oculina Bank) – Roger Pugliese
- Fishery Ecosystem Plan – Roger Pugliese
- SG Regulatory Amendment 31 (Recreational AMs) – Brian Chevront
- SG Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization) – Brian Chevront
- SG Amendment 50 (Red Porgy Rebuilding and Allocations) – Myra Brouwer
- DW Amendment 10 (Management Measures for Dolphin and Wahoo) – John Hadley
- DW Amendment 12 (Bullet and Frigate Mackerel as EC Species) – John Hadley
- Spiny Lob Regulatory Amendment 5 (Comm Trip Limits for SG1 and LT Permits off GA-NC) – Christina Wiegand
- Bycatch Reporting Amendment – Mike Schmidtke
- Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment – Mike Schmidtke and Mike Errigo

Table 2. Currently active SSC workgroups and their membership.

Workgroup	Members
Ecopath Model Review Workgroup	Yan Li (Chair)
	Eric Johnson
	Alexei Sharov
	Fred Scharf

8.3. Public Comment

See meeting minutes.

8.4. Action

- No specific actions required

9. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- The SSC was briefed by staff on the Decision Tree approach to allocations.
- The SSC formed a WG to review SSC SOPPs, specifically to:
 - ❖ *Review procedures of other SSCs*
 - ❖ *Attempt to become more efficient in our procedures*
 - ❖ *Encourage judicious and effective use of webinars*
 - ❖ *Consider polling the SSC about the number of meetings and their length*

- ❖ *The following SSC members volunteered to serve on this WG: Scott Crosson, Tracy Yandle, Genny Nesslage, Jeff Buckel, Steve Poland, George Sedberry.*
- Discussion of the new Council payment method was deferred due to lack of time. Council staff agreed to send the SSC a recording of the presentation given to the Council in September.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

The public was provided an additional opportunity to comment on SSC recommendations and agenda items. See meeting minutes.

11. CONSENSUS STATEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW

The Committee reviewed its report, final consensus statements, and final recommendations.

The Final SSC report will be provided to the Council by close of business on Friday, November 13, 2020 (approximately 4 weeks from the end of the meeting) for inclusion in the briefing book for the December Council meeting.

12. NEXT MEETINGS

12.1. SAFMC SSC MEETINGS

2021 Proposed Spring Meeting Dates:

- April 20-22, 2021 in Charleston, SC
 - Leaves less time for assessment review, but more time for report writing.
- April 27-29, 2021 in Charleston, SC
 - Typically, the preferred week.
 - ❖ *The SSC recommended this date for the spring meeting.*
- May 4-6, 2021 in Charleston, SC
 - Leaves less time for report writing, but more time for assessment review.

12.2. SAFMC Meetings

2020 Council Meetings

December 7-11, 2020 in Wrightsville Beach, NC

2021 Council Meetings

March 1-5, 2021 in Jekyll Island, GA

June 14-18 in Ponte Vedra, FL

September 13-17 in Charleston, SC

December 6-10 in Beaufort, NC