

**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**



**SSC Meeting Overview - REVISED**  
**October 22-24, 2024**

**Hotel Indigo Mount Pleasant**  
**250 Jonnie Dodds Blvd.**  
**Mount Pleasant, SC 29464**

VERSION  
REVISED  
10/17/24

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## **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 10:00 a.m., October 24<sup>th</sup>.

### 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 in-person at Hotel Indigo Mount Pleasant, 250 Jonnie Dodds Blvd., Mount Pleasant, SC. Online registration for the meeting can be found at the Council's website: <https://safmc.net/scientific-and-statistical-committee-meeting/>

## 1. INTRODUCTIONS

### 1.1 Documents

Attachment 1a. SSC October 2024 Agenda

Attachment 1b. Minutes from the August 2024 meeting

Attachment 1c. August 2024 Meeting Final Report

### 1.2 Action

- Introductions
- Review and approve agenda.
- Approve minutes from August 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 comment should indicate their desire to do so to the Committee Chair.

## 3. ABC-CR AND STOCK RISK RATINGS

### 3.1 Documents

\*Attachment 3a. South Atlantic ABC-CR Presentation

Attachment 3b. Comprehensive ABC-CR Amendment

\*Attachment 3c. ABC-CR Quick Reference

Attachment 3d. ABC-CR Risk Tolerance Spreadsheet

### 3.2 Presentation

SAFMC Staff

### 3.3 Overview

The South Atlantic FMC in collaboration with their SSC recently developed a new ABC Control Rule (ABC-CR) amendment applicable to the Snapper-Grouper, Dolphin-Wahoo, and Golden Crab fishery management plans. The new ABC-CR categorizes stocks based on the available information and scientific uncertainty evaluation and incorporates the Council's risk tolerance policy through an accepted probability of overfishing (P\*). The Council will specify the P\* based on the relative stock biomass output from an updated stock assessment and a stock risk rating that is developed using a variety of biological, social, economic, and environmental indicators. The new ABC-CR was developed to increase flexibility and adaptability in accounting for uncertainty through both the scientific and management process, to incorporate phase-in and carry-over provisions, and to provide a mechanism for categorizing uncertainty in data-limited and unassessed stocks.

The stock risk rating matrix is compiled from SSC and Advisory Panel input based on available information from SEDAR stock assessment reports, commercial and recreational databases, fishery performance reports, and social and economic indicators. The scoring matrix from the SSC and AP is aggregated and approved by the Council before the completion of a new stock assessment and along with the relative stock biomass estimate provides the accepted probability of overfishing ( $P^*$ ). The template for the stock risk ratings is included as Attachment D and will be updated with available information to help inform the scoring during the meeting.

The SSC will receive a refresher on the new ABC-CR amendment and provide input on the stock risk ratings metrics for Tilefish, Blueline Tilefish, Mutton Snapper, Yellowtail Snapper, and Red Snapper.

### 3.4 Public Comment

### 3.5 Action

- Receive refresher on the new South Atlantic ABC-CR
- Update stock risk ratings for Tilefish, Blueline Tilefish, Mutton Snapper, Yellowtail Snapper, and Red Snapper.

## 4. **SEDAR PROCESS UPDATE AND KEY STOCKS**

### 4.1 Documents

- \*Attachment 4a. SEDAR Process Changes Presentation
- \*Attachment 4b. Key Stocks Discussion Presentation
- \*Attachment 4c. Key Stocks Report SEDAR Committee

### 4.2 Presentation

Julie Neer, SEDAR; and SAFMC Staff

### 4.3 Overview

The SEDAR steering committee has recommended numerous changes to the SEDAR process for conducting stock assessments to improve throughput and timeliness in providing management advice. These proposed changes were developed by the SEFSC with the input of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils cooperators based on the respective Council and SEFSC objectives and priorities. SEDAR staff will provide a summary of the SEDAR goals and objectives, the need for modification to the current process, the goals and objectives for the proposed changes, and the SSC's roles in the proposed process.

A fundamental component of the proposed changes involves the selection of “key stocks” for each region, which are intended to represent those stocks that ‘drive’ the fishery and provide a subset that can indicate conditions of the fishery and stocks of a larger complex (e.g. snapper-grouper). The Council and SEFSC have compiled a preliminary list of the proposed key stocks for the South Atlantic region and are seeking feedback from the SSC on the identification of key

stocks for regular assessment scheduling, the criteria and information necessary for the determination of the key stocks, and any recommended changes to the proposed list.

#### 4.4 Public Comment

#### 4.5 Action

- SEDAR process changes and role of SSC
  - Provide guidance on the structure of the proposed assessment process:
    - Other components to include (in addition to data workshops, assessment webinar, stock ID, peer review, process panels or topical working groups)?
    - Recommend data or assessment topics to be included in the process.
- Key Stocks Discussion:
  - Support identifying key stocks for regular assessment scheduling? Support fixed, long-term scheduling of key stocks?
    - What are the foreseeable benefits/drawbacks to this approach?
  - What information would guide the criteria for the determination of key stocks (e.g. landings trends, life history information, indices, etc.)?
    - What information is needed for the SSC to provide catch level recommendations vs. what is needed for a stock 'health check'?
    - Does the SSC recommend interim analyses, updates, or other methods for the 'UM' segments?
  - Does the SSC recommend any changes to the proposed key stocks based on information identified above?

## 5. **SPR PROXIES IN SOUTH ATLANTIC STOCK ASSESSMENTS**

### 5.1 Documents

Attachment 5. SPR Proxies Presentation

### 5.2 Presentation

Erik Williams, SEFSC

### 5.3 Overview

The SAFMC has requested the SSC review scientific information and provide thorough rationale for using the recommended spawning potential ratio (SPR) proxies for maximum sustainable yield (MSY) in South Atlantic stocks as status determination criteria. For most current South Atlantic fishery management plans, the MSY proxy had historically been set at F30%SPR (Comprehensive Amendment, 1998), but recent technical guidance on National Standard 1 from

NMFS has indicated that the SPR proxy should be re-evaluated with each new stock assessment as scientific information has evolved over time. The SEFSC will provide a presentation on SPR proxies for the South Atlantic. The SSC should review this presentation and provide a thorough rationale and scientific justification for using recommended proxies in stock assessments and for management. The Council's request for this rationale stemmed from discussion of the Black Sea Bass stock assessment review but would be applicable for other stocks moving forward.

#### 5.4 Public Comment

#### 5.5 Action

- Review presentation on SPR proxies for South Atlantic stocks
- Provide thorough rationale and scientific justification for use of recommended SPR proxies.

## 6. **BLACK SEA BASS PROJECTIONS**

#### 6.1 Documents

- \*Attachment 6a. Black Sea Bass Projections Presentation
- \*Attachment 6b. Black Sea Bass Projections Report
- \*Attachment 6c. Snapper Grouper Amendment 56 Discussion Document

#### 6.2 Presentation

SAFMC Staff; and Matt Vincent, SEFSC

#### 6.3 Overview

The SEFSC has developed numerous projection scenarios based on requests made by the Council. These scenarios included: projection runs when changing minimum size limits to 11, 12, and 13 inches; discard  $F$  is reallocated to landings  $F$ ; phase-in approach of ABC reductions over 3 years; and applying commercial/recreational allocation to total fishery yield, before subtracting discards (see attachment 6a 'introduction' for details).

Following the September Council, an additional request was made to provide projections for Black Sea Bass at  $F_{MSY}$ . The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for black sea bass has the proxy for  $F_{MSY}$  explicitly defined as  $F_{30\%}$  of unfished levels. The SSC decided that the appropriate SPR proxy for  $MSY$  in SEDAR 76 should be  $F_{40\%}$  (Table 1). Since the FMP is in a different metric than what is reported in SEDAR 76, the Southeast regional office has not listed black sea bass as overfished to the Council. Because of this discrepancy, the Council has divided the amendment process into two amendments: the first would set catch levels based on the current  $F_{MSY}$  proxy, and a second that would establish a rebuilding plan, once the stock has been declared overfished (see 6c 'background' for details).

The SSC should review the most recent projection scenarios provided by the SEFSC and then make catch level recommendations for Black Sea Bass based on the  $F_{MSY}$  ( $F_{40\%}$ ) proxy values.



## 6.4 Public Comment

## 6.5 Action

- Review most recent projection scenarios associated with  $F_{rebuild}$  and characterize uncertainties.
- Set catch level recommendations based on the  $F_{MSY}$  ( $F_{40\%}$ ) proxy values.

Table 1. South Atlantic Black Sea Bass Projections Output ( $F_{40\%}$ )

Table 1. Estimated status indicators, benchmarks, and related quantities for  $F_{40\%}$  from the base run of the BAM, conditional on estimated current selectivities averaged across fleets. Also presented are median values and measures of precision (standard errors, SE) from the Monte Carlo/Bootstrap ensemble analysis. Rate estimates ( $F$ ) are in units of  $y^{-1}$ ; status indicators are dimensionless; biomass estimates are in units of thousands of pounds, as indicated. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) is measured as weight of mature fish in thousands of pounds.  $L_{current}$  and  $D_{current}$  are the average landings and discards from 2019–2021, respectively. Estimates of yield do not include discards;  $D_{F40\%}$  represents discard mortalities expected when fishing at  $F_{40\%}$ .

Quantity	Units	Estimate	Median	SE
$F_{40\%}$	$y^{-1}$	1.18	1.28	1.36
$B_{F40\%}$	1000 lb	17688.58	22071.29	18851.44
$SSB_{F40\%}$	1000 lb	8736.42	10219.24	1951.55
MSST	1000 lb	5460.26	5807.19	1152.61
$L_{F40\%}$	1000 lb	674.53	492.38	367.25
$L_{75\%F40\%}$	1000 lb	808.39	633.13	356.01
$L_{current}$	1000 lb	544.23	536.40	65.80
$D_{F40\%}$	1000 dead fish	4530.85	6599.32	7825.67
$D_{F40\%}$ klb	1000 lb	1901.63	2655.96	2374.23
$D_{75\%F40\%}$	1000 dead fish	3678.27	2285.27	2220.61
$D_{75\%F40\%}$ klb	1000 lb	1592.67	2285.27	2220.61
$D_{current}$	1000 dead fish	935.34	1242.30	530.60
$D_{current}$ klb	1000 lb	437.42	575.19	234.03
$F_{2019-2021}/F_{40\%}$	—	0.79	0.61	1.14
$SSB_{2021}/MSST$	—	0.57	0.72	0.41
$SSB_{2021}/SSB_{F40\%}$	—	0.36	0.42	0.27

Table 2. South Atlantic Black Sea Bass Catch Level Recommendations

Criteria			Value	
Stock Risk Rating				
Relative Stock Biomass Level				
P-Star				
SSC recommended P <sub>Rebuild</sub>			N/A	
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				

## 7. SEDAR 89: SOUTH ATLANTIC TILEFISH STOCK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

### 7.1 Documents

Attachment 7a. SEDAR89: Tilefish Stock Assessment Report

\*Attachment 7b. South Atlantic Tilefish Stock Assessment Presentation

Attachment 7c. SEDAR 89: Terms of Reference

### 7.2 Presentation

Matt Vincent, SEFSC

### 7.3 Overview

The SEDAR 89: South Atlantic Tilefish stock assessment was an operational assessment completed using the Beaufort Assessment Model (BAM) with a terminal year of 2022. Data compilation and assessment methods were guided by methods used in previous Tilefish assessments (SEDAR 4, SEDAR 25, and SEDAR 66), and other recent SEDAR assessments along with recommendations from the topical working group for this assessment. A base run of

BAM was configured and a mixed Monte Carlo/Bootstrap Ensemble (MCBE) analysis was conducted to provide estimates of key management quantities, such as stock and fishery status.

Current stock status was estimated in the base run to be  $SSB_{2022}/MSST = 1.261$ , indicating that the stock is not overfished. Throughout its history, SSB did not drop below MSST. Results from the MCBE suggested that the estimate of SSB relative to  $SSB_{MSY}$  and the status relative to MSST is highly uncertain. A small majority (54%) of MCBE runs agreed with the stock status result from the base assessment model. The base model, median and majority of the MCBE suggests that the stock is not overfished but is below  $SSB_{MSY}$ .

The estimated time series of  $F/F_{MSY}$  from the assessment model suggests that although  $F$  has exceeded  $F_{MSY}$  sporadically for individual years during the assessment period, it has not been consistently above the limit since the period of overfishing during 1990-1995. However, fishing mortality has been increasing considerably since 2010 and is estimated to be above  $F_{MSY}$  in the terminal year of the model. There is considerable uncertainty in  $F/F_{MSY}$  as demonstrated by the MCBE, especially toward the end of the assessment period. Current fishery status in the terminal year, with current  $F$  represented by the geometric mean from 2020 – 2022 ( $F_{current} = F_{2020-2022} = 0.216$ ), was estimated by the base run to be  $F_{2020-2022}/F_{MSY} = 1$ . Thus, at the end of the assessment Tilefish was fully exploited. However, results from the MCBE show that there is a lot of uncertainty in the fishing status of the species. Only 35% of MCBE runs agreed with the fishing status result from the base model, and the median value of  $F_{2020-2022}/F_{MSY}$  from the MCBE runs (1.16).

The SSC is asked to review, discuss, and provide feedback on the SEDAR 89: South Atlantic Tilefish Operational Assessment model configurations, projections, and uncertainties. If the assessment is determined to be suitable for providing management advice, the SSC will apply the new ABC Control Rule and make catch-level recommendations to the Council.

#### 7.4 Public Comment

#### 7.5 Action

##### ➤ **Review assessment**

- Does the assessment address the ToRs to the SSCs satisfaction?
- Is the assessment consistent with BSIA guidance and practices?
- Does the assessment reliably capture past trends in the fishery and population?
- Does the assessment provide a reliable, quantitative estimate of current stock status?
- Does the assessment provide reliable predictions of future conditions to support 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.
  - Describe the risks and consequences of the assessment uncertainties with regard to status and fishing level recommendations.
  - Are methods of addressing uncertainty consistent with SSC expectations and the available information?
  - List (in order of the greatest contribution to risk and overall assessment uncertainty) and comment on the effects of those assessment factors that most contribute to risk and impact status determinations and future yield predictions.
- **Provide fishing level recommendations.**
- Apply the ABC control rule. Discuss and make recommendations on probability of rebuilding projections.
  - 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 included in the SAFE Report to monitor and evaluate the stock until the next assessment? Current data will be included:
    - Total Landings relative to ABC from the previous assessment until values from SEDAR 89 are adopted.
    - Recreational (CHTS and FES values) and Commercial Landings
    - Trends in abundance included in SEDAR 89
    - Economic trends
      - Recreational – MRIP Directed Trips
      - Commercial – Ex-Vessel Value
    - Social trends
      - Observations of Closures
      - Comments from Fishery Performance Report
    - Recent management actions
    - Other?
- **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.

Table 3. SEDAR 89: South Atlantic Tilefish Stock Assessment Output

Table 18. Estimated status indicators, benchmarks, and related quantities from the base run of the BAM, conditional on estimated current selectivities averaged across fleets. Also presented are median values and measures of precision (standard errors, SE) from the Monte Carlo/Bootstrap ensemble analysis. Rate estimates ( $F$ ) are in units of  $y^{-1}$ ; status indicators are dimensionless; biomass estimates are in units of thousands of pounds, as indicated; and recruits are in millions of age-1 fish. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) is measured as fecundity of mature females (trillion eggs).  $L_{\text{current}}$  are the average landings from 2020–2022.

Quantity	Units	Estimate	Median	SE
$F_{\text{MSY}}$	$y^{-1}$	0.22	0.18	0.06
$75\%F_{\text{MSY}}$	$y^{-1}$	0.16	0.14	0.04
$B_{\text{MSY}}$	1000 lb whole	6191.07	7263.71	2446.69
$\text{SSB}_{\text{MSY}}$	Trillions of Eggs	0.514	0.651	1.738
$\text{MSST}$	Trillions of Eggs	0.385	0.488	1.304
$\text{MSY}$	1000 lb gutted	545.08	564.30	70.90
$L_{75\%\text{MSY}}$	1000 lb gutted	524.22	540.50	68.97
$L_{\text{current}}$	1000 lb gutted	531.56	530.24	19.54
$R_{\text{MSY}}$	millions fish	0.05	0.05	0.01
$F_{2020-2022}/F_{\text{MSY}}$	—	1.00	1.16	0.52
$\text{SSB}_{2022}/\text{MSST}$	—	1.26	1.04	0.42
$\text{SSB}_{2022}/\text{SSB}_{\text{MSY}}$	—	0.95	0.78	0.32

Table 4. South Atlantic SSC Tilefish Catch Level Recommendations

Criteria			Value	
Stock Risk Rating				
Relative Stock Biomass Level				
P-Star				
SSC recommended P <sub>Rebuild</sub>			N/A	
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				

## 8. SOUTH ATLANTIC FOR-HIRE REPORTING MODIFICATIONS

### 8.1 Documents

Attachment 8a. SEFHIER Improvement Decision Document

\*Attachment 8b. SEFHIER Improvement Summary Presentation

\*Attachment 8c. SEP Report Summary, Oct 7

### 8.2 Presentation

John Hadley, SAFMC Staff; Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes, SEP Chair

### 8.3 Overview

The Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) Program was launched in 2021 with the implementation of the Comprehensive For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment (SAFMC 2017). The amendment put in place or modified reporting requirements for federally permitted charter vessels and headboats in the snapper grouper (SG), dolphin wahoo (DW), and coastal migratory pelagics (mackerel and cobia; CMP) fisheries. Reporting requirements through SEFHIER went into effect for charter/for-hire vessels in January 2021.

Recent issues with for-hire reporting in the South Atlantic (most notably low compliance), led the SAFMC to initiate discussions on ways to improve compliance, strengthen reporting requirements, and explore data validation, with the goal of utilizing the information collected in future management decisions. At the June 2024 meeting, the Council received additional feedback from the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center that data being collected through the SEFHIER program cannot be used at all for assessments or management due to low compliance and lack of validation. It was also noted that NMFS cannot validate the logbook until reporting compliance improves.

The Council began discussions on ways to improve compliance for the SEFHIER program and has requested additional information and feedback from the SSC and SEP in the development of the SEFHIER improvement amendment. The SEP met via webinar October 7<sup>th</sup> to provide this feedback and the SEP chair will present the meeting report to the SSC. The SSC should provide any additional recommendations to the SEP recommendations to relay to the Council for their December meeting.

### 8.4 Public Comment

### 8.5 Action

- Is there information in the program that can still be used, such as for evaluating management alternatives, improving understanding of the fishery, filling in assessment unknowns?

- What information would be useful for the SSC to review if the data are to be used for management advice (Sample size, geographic distribution of samples, etc.)?

## **9. SNAPPER GROUPER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION**

### **9.1 Documents**

Attachment 9. Snapper Grouper MSE Presentation

### **9.2 Presentation**

Adrian Hordyk, Blue Matter Science

### **9.3 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 Council and Snapper-Grouper Advisory Panel. Scientific input in modeling and uncertainties has been obtained through numerous presentations to the SSC and MSE technical team.

The SSC is requested to review the final updates made to the Snapper Grouper MSE, and discuss the data inputs and uncertainties with the operating model, management options, performance metrics, results, and future iterations of the MSE process.

### **9.4 Public Comment**

### **9.5 Action**

#### **➤ Operating Model**

- Does the model appropriately characterize population dynamics for Black Sea Bass, Gag, and Red Snapper?
- Does the spatial structure seem appropriate for the three species?
- Are the fisheries represented properly?

- Does the model address key uncertainties (differences in M, reduced recreational removals, effort changes, and recent recruitment)?
- **Management Options**
  - Are the management options appropriately included in the projection analysis?
  - Should dynamic management options be considered for use instead of static management?
- **Performance Metrics**
  - Are the performance metrics evaluated appropriately?
- **Results**
  - Is the model appropriate as a basis for developing management recommendations?
  - Discuss which strategies could meet goals for reducing discards and rebuilding Black Sea Bass, Gag, and Red Snapper.
- **Future MSE**
  - What other strategies should be explored for future iterations?
  - What is the next piece of information to integrate into a future MSE (i.e. Ecopath with EcoSim, social and economic information, additional species, commercial measures, etc.)?

## 10. MUTTON AND YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER SSC REVIEW PLAN

### 10.1 Documents

Attachment 10. Mutton and Yellowtail Snapper Review Plan Presentation

### 10.2 Presentation

Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff

### 10.3 Overview

The SEDAR 79: Southeastern Mutton Snapper and SEDAR 96: Southeastern Yellowtail Snapper stock assessments will be jointly reviewed by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico SSCs in early 2025. Both these species are Florida-centric species comprised of one stock that spans the jurisdictional boundary between the two Councils, necessitating joint scientific review and management. The joint SSC will be responsible for reviewing each stock assessment, applying the ABC-CR, and providing OFL and ABC catch level recommendations for the entire stock. A strategy for the joint review process and panel composition has been developed and will be presented to each SSC and Council for approval.

### 10.4 Public Comment

### 10.5 Action



- Review approach, process, and timeline for joint review of Mutton and Yellowtail Snapper stock assessments.
- Enlist 10-11 SSC members for sub-group.

## **11. SCIENTIFIC COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING REPORT**

### **11.1 Documents**

Attachment 11a. SCS8 Final Agenda

Attachment 11b. SCS8 Summary and Outcomes Presentation

### **11.2 Presentation**

Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff

### **11.3 Overview**

The Scientific Coordination Subcommittee convened its 8th workshop (SCS8) in Boston, MA on August 26-28, 2024, hosted by the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC). The SCS8 meeting theme was *Applying ABC Control Rules in a Changing Environment* and featured three sub-themes: (1) Advances in ecosystem science and assessment to inform ABC control rules in a dynamic environment, (2) Application of social science to achieve management goals under dynamic conditions, and (3) Adaptation of reference points, control rules, and rebuilding plans to a changing environment. The meeting included several keynote speakers in sub-theme areas and regional case studies from SSC members and NOAA staff followed by break-out groups and synthesis of ideas. On the final day, participants broke out into regional SSC groups and brainstormed several ideas for actionable outcomes, implementation, and pathways forward for their respective regional SSCs.

### **11.4 Public Comment**

### **11.5 Action**

- Receive report on the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee 8<sup>th</sup> annual meeting.
- Review existing actionable outcomes, develop additional ones, and discuss strategies for implementation.

## **12. SEFSC PRECISION THRESHOLDS WORKGROUP**

### **12.1 Documents**

Attachment 12. SEFSC Precision Thresholds Workgroup Presentation

## 12.2 Presentation

Vivian Matter, SEFSC

## 12.3 Overview

A joint NOAA Southeast Fishery Science Center (SEFSC) and NOAA Office of Science and Technology (OST) workgroup was formed last year to analyze highly imprecise estimate scenarios that are impacting assessments and how to address these concerns. Once determined, these methods will be used to provide updated data streams for the South Atlantic unassessed stocks, and the Unassessed Stocks SSC workgroup can begin exploring appropriate analytical tools to set ABCs for the upcoming unassessed stocks amendment. The SSC will receive an update on the progress of this workgroup.

## 12.4 Public Comment

## 12.5 Action

- Receive update on the progress of the precision thresholds workgroup
- Enlist SSC members to participate in the review panel

# 13. **SSC WORKGROUPS AND SEDAR PANELS MEMBERSHIP**

## 13.1 Documents

Attachment 13. SSC Workgroup and SEDAR Panels Membership Document

## 13.2 Presentation

Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff

## 13.3 Overview

Council staff will review the list of SSC workgroups and SEDAR panel membership and provide any updates from recent work accomplished by the workgroups or SEDAR panels.

The SEDAR 92: Atlantic Blueline Tilefish stock assessment is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2025. This stock overlaps the jurisdictional boundary of the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic and will require joint review by the respective Council SSCs for setting catch level recommendations. Procedurally, the Mid-Atlantic SSC does not review stock assessments in the same manner as the South Atlantic SSC, relying on technical panels for assessment review, and the SSC role strictly relates to setting catch level recommendations, while the South Atlantic SSC is typically responsible for both assessment review and setting catch level recommendations. Because of the difference in role between the two SSCs, the recommended approach was to develop a sub-group consisting of 2-3 SSC members and Council staff from each region, and SEFSC representatives to discuss the planning, procedure, and timeline for the Blueline Tilefish review for both regions. Ideally, SSC members volunteering for this sub-group would be part of the review panel. The entire South Atlantic SSC will have an opportunity to review the assessment during our spring 2025 meeting.

### 13.4 Public Comment

### 13.5 Action

- Receive updates on recent workgroup and SEDAR panel business
- Form planning sub-group for joint review of the upcoming Blueline Tilefish stock assessment.

## **14. REVIEW OF POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL PROJECTIONS FOR TILEFISH AND BSB**

### 14.1 Documents

Attachment 14. TBD

### 14.2 Presentation

Matt Vincet, SEFSC

### 14.3 Overview

After reviewing base models and/or projection scenarios, the SSC will have the opportunity to review additional projection runs that were requested from agenda items above.

### 14.4 Public Comment

### 14.5 Action

- Review additional requested projections for Black Sea Bass (if necessary)
- Review additional requested projections for Tilefish (if necessary)

## **15. OTHER BUSINESS**

- Review of Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Reports

## **16. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The public is provided one final opportunity to comment on SSC recommendations and agenda items.

## **17. CONSENSUS STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The Final SSC report will be provided to the Council by noon on Friday, November 15, 2024 (approximately 3 weeks from the end of the meeting) for inclusion in the briefing book for the December Council meeting.

## **18. NEXT MEETINGS**

### **18.1 Scientific and Statistical Committee Meetings**

- February 25-26, 2025 in Tampa, FL (sub-group review)
- April 14-15, 2025 in Charleston, SC (SEP)
- April 15-17, 2025 in Charleston, SC (SSC)
- October 21-23, 2025 in Charleston, SC

### **18.2 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meetings**

- December 2-6, 2024 in Wrightsville Beach, NC
- March 3-7, 2025 in Georgia (TBD)
- June 9-13, 2025 in Cape Canaveral, FL

**ADJOURN**