

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE



SSC Meeting Overview (Revised)

October 27-29, 2021

Meeting via Webinar

**VERSION
DRAFT
October 22, 2021**

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*** Indicates documents not available for the Briefing Book. These will be distributed as they become available and added to the Late Materials folder.**

Background Information:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Background 3c. | SEDAR 68 Scamp Research Track Assessment TORs |
| Background 4c. | SSC SEDAR and Workgroup Members |

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 12:00 pm Friday, October 29, 2021.

Verbal comment:

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

An opportunity for comment on specific agenda items will also be provided as each item comes up for discussion. Comments will be taken after all the initial presentations are given and before the SSC starts the discussion of the agenda topic. As before, those wishing to comment should indicate such in the manner requested by the Chair, who will then recognize individuals to provide comment. All comments are part of the record of the meeting.

Meeting Format:

This meeting will be held as a series of webinars from October 27-29, 2021. Registration for the meeting can be found at the Council's website: <https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/scientific-and-statistical-committee-meetings/>.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Documents

- SSC Agenda October 2021
- Attachment 1. Minutes of the July 2021 meeting

1.2. Action

- Introductions
- Review and Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

2.1. Documents

Attachment 2. SAFMC Public Comment Process

3. SEDAR 68 ATLANTIC SCAMP RESEARCH TRACK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

3.1. Documents

Attachment 3a. SEDAR 68 Scamp Research Track Assessment Report
Attachment 3b. SEDAR 68 Scamp Research Track Assessment Presentation
Background 3c. SEDAR 68 Scamp Research Track Assessment TORs

3.2. Presentation

SEDAR 68 Assessment Overview – Dr. Francesca Forrestal, SEFSC

3.3. Overview

The SSC is asked to provide feedback on the Atlantic Scamp Research Track Assessment prepared through the SEDAR 68 (Attachment 3a), and identify and characterize the impacts of assessment uncertainties. This is the first research track assessment conducted through the SEDAR process and was conducted alongside an assessment with Gulf of Mexico Scamp. An operational assessment to provide management advice for Scamp will begin in 2022. Atlantic Scamp has never been assessed through the SEDAR process and the current stock status is unknown.

3.4. Public Comment

3.5. Breakout Groups

3.6. Action

- Review assessment
 - Does the assessment address the ToRs to the SSCs satisfaction?
 - Does the assessment represent Best Scientific Information Available?
 - Are there any issues with the assessment configuration that would prevent it from providing stock status and supporting 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.
 - Qualitatively characterize these factors in terms of their influence on assessment uncertainty.
 - List the risks and describe potential consequences of assessment uncertainties with regard to stock status, fishing level recommendations, and future yield predictions.
 - Are methods of addressing uncertainty consistent with SSC expectations and the available information?
- Provide research recommendations and guidance on the upcoming operational 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 the 2022 operational assessment, future stock assessments (after 2022 operational assessment), evaluation of uncertainty, application of the ABC Control Rule, and fishing level recommendations.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

4. SEDAR 68 ATLANTIC SCAMP OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

4.1. Documents

Attachment 4a. SEDAR 68 Scamp Operational Assessment Schedule

Attachment 4b. SEDAR 68 Scamp Operational Assessment Terms of Reference

4.2. Presentation

SEDAR 68 Scamp OA Materials – Kathleen Howington, SAFMC Staff

4.3. Overview

The SSC is asked to review the SEDAR 68 Scamp Operational Assessment schedule, draft terms of reference and appoint/suggest topical working group members (if necessary). This operational assessment is scheduled to begin in 2022 pending review of the terms of reference and schedule by the Council at the December 2021 meeting.

4.4. Public Comment

4.5. Action

- Review draft Terms of Reference
- Review Schedule
- Appoint topical working group members (if recommended)

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

5. SEDAR 82 GRAY TRIGGERFISH RESEARCH TRACK

5.1. Documents

Attachment 5a. SEDAR 82 Gray Triggerfish Schedule

Attachment 5b. SEDAR 82 Gray Triggerfish Terms of Reference

5.2. Presentation

SEDAR 82 Gray Triggerfish Materials – Kathleen Howington, SAFMC Staff

5.3. Overview

The SSC is asked to review the SEDAR 82 Gray Triggerfish Research Track schedule and terms of reference, and appoint Chairs and ADT members for the data, assessment, and review workshops.

5.4. Public Comment

5.5. Action

- Review Terms of Reference
- Review Schedule
- Appoint Chairs and ADT members for SEDAR 82 workshops

SSC RECOMMENDATION:**6. SEDAR UPCOMING ASSESSMENTS - TILEFISH**6.1. Documents

Attachment 6. SEDAR Tilefish Schedule and Scope of Work

6.2. Presentation

SEDAR Tilefish Materials – SAFMC Staff

6.3. Overview

The SSC is asked to review the SEDAR Tilefish Operational Assessment schedule and draft scope of work.

6.4. Public Comment6.5. Action

- Review draft Scope of Work
- Review Schedule

SSC RECOMMENDATION:**7. SEDAR 71 GAG GROUPER PROJECTIONS REVIEW**7.1. Documents

*Attachment 7a. SEDAR 71 Gag New Projections Presentation
Attachment 7b. SEDAR 71 Gag New Projections Report

7.2. Presentation

SEDAR 71 Gag Projections – Dr. Erik Williams, SEFSC

7.3. Overview

The SSC is asked to review the new SEDAR 71 Gag catch and rebuilding projections requested by the SAFMC at the September Council meeting (Attachment 7) and provide fishing level recommendations. Gag was last assessed during the SEDAR 71 in 2021, where the stock was found to be overfished and undergoing overfishing. The terminal (2019) base-run estimate of spawning stock was below the minimum stock size threshold ($SSB_{2019}/MSST=0.20$), indicating that the stock is overfished, and the estimated terminal fishing rate based on a three-year geometric mean is above F_{msy} ($F_{2017-2019}/F_{msy}=2.15$), indicating overfishing is occurring. The new projection requests include additional catch projections for Gag at average and recent low

recruitment scenarios and with 70% and 50% probabilities of rebuilding in 10 years. These new projections will be reviewed by the SAFMC at the December 2021 Council meeting. The Council will need to select a rebuilding plan for the stock and the two probability rebuilding scenarios have been selected by the Council in past to rebuild stocks.

7.4. Public Comment

7.5. Action

- Provide fishing level recommendations
 - Discuss the appropriate recruitment scenario (average or low) to project future fishing level recommendations.
 - Discuss the 10-year rebuilding probabilities at 70% and 50%. What are the potential consequences of adopting P_{rebuild} of 50% vs SSC-recommended P_{rebuild} of 70%?
 - Apply the ABC control rule and complete the fishing level recommendations table.
 - Comment on any difficulties encountered in applying the Control Rule, including any required information that is not available.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

Table 1. Gag Recommendations

| Criteria | Deterministic | | Probabilistic | |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Overfished evaluation (SSB/SSB _{MSY}) | 0.15 | | 0.14 | |
| Overfishing evaluation | 2.15 | | 2.27 | |
| MFMT (F _{MSY}) | 0.37 | | 0.35 | |
| SSB _{MSY} (Units) | 1563.9 | | 1659.4 | |
| MSST (Units) | 1172.9 | | 1244.5 | |
| MSY (1000 lbs.) | 1455.1 | | 1453.5 | |
| Y at 75% F _{MSY} (1000 lbs.) | | | | |
| ABC Control Rule Adjustment | 20% | | | |
| P-Star | 30% | | | |
| M | 0.15 | | | |
| OFL RECOMMENDATIONS | | | | |
| Year | Landed LBS | Discard LBS | Landed Number | Discard Number |
| 2023 | 367 | | 36 | |
| 2024 | 494 | | 45 | |
| 2025 | 605 | | 53 | |
| 2026 | 706 | | 60 | |
| 2027 | 808 | | 68 | |
| ABC RECOMMENDATIONS | | | | |
| Year | Landed LBS | Discard LBS | Landed Number | Discard Number |
| 2023 | | | | |
| 2024 | | | | |
| 2025 | | | | |
| 2026 | | | | |
| 2027 | | | | |

8. ECOSYSTEM IMPACTS OF HIGH RED SNAPPER RECRUITMENT**8.1. Documents**

*Attachment 8a. Ecosystem Impacts of Red Snapper Recruitment Presentation

*Attachment 8b. EwE Red Snapper Workshop Findings Summary

*Attachment 8c. EwE All Results Table

8.2. Presentation

Ecosystem Impacts of High Red Snapper Recruitment – Lauren Gentry, FWRI

8.3. Overview

The SSC will review and make comments on an Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) model that examined the effects of high Red Snapper recruitment on the South Atlantic ecosystem. The EwE workgroup convened a 3-day workshop in September to review the EwE model results and comment on the findings. The results of this workshop and discussion from the SSC during this meeting will be presented to the SAFMC at the December Council meeting.

8.4. Public Comment

8.5. Action

- Review and provide comments on the implications of these findings for Red Snapper and other South Atlantic stock assessments.
- Does the model describe a potential range of impacts from high Red Snapper recruitment?
- Are there any changes to the presentation/report needed before presentation to the Council?

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

9. STANDARD BYCATCH REPORTING METHODOLOGY

9.1. Documents

Attachment 9a. Review of Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology

Attachment 9b. Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology Presentation

9.2. Presentation

Review of Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology – Frank Helies, SERO

9.3. Overview

The SSC will review and comment on the review of the Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) with particular emphasis towards fishery management plans for the South Atlantic region. SBRMs are required for every federal fishery management plan. A final rule requiring review of SBRM's every 5 years was published in February 2017. The first review of the SAFMC's SBRMs was conducted by NMFS with help from SAFMC staff (Attachment 9a). The SSC is asked to comment on the methodology design considerations such as data elements, sampling designs, sample sizes, and reporting frequency. The Committee should discuss the review of the current methodologies used to describe bycatch reporting and data gaps present.

9.4. Public Comment

9.5. Action

- Discuss and comment on the review of SBRM:
 - Are the reporting methods standardized within fishery management plans and feasible to execute?
 - Is the scientific uncertainty resulting from the methods properly characterized and adequate in the review?
 - Provide recommendations for improving bycatch reporting for the southeast region. What data/resource gaps are there and how can they be addressed?
- Target Questions:
 - Feasibility: What is the feasibility of the bycatch methodology from cost, technical, and operational perspectives?
 - Data Use: How are the data resulting from a SBRM used to assess the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery?
 - Data Uncertainty: Can the uncertainty associated with bycatch data be described, quantitatively or qualitatively?

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

10. CATCH LEVEL PROJECTIONS WORKGROUP

10.1. Documents

Attachment 10. Catch Level Projections Workgroup Report

10.2. Presentation

Workgroup Report – Dr. Amy Schueller, SSC

10.3. Overview

The SSC will be given an overview of the preliminary findings and future directions of the Catch Level Projections Workgroup, which has met twice since the last SSC meeting.

10.4. Public Comment

10.5. Action

- No action items.

11. CASE STUDIES FOR SCS7

11.1. Documents

Attachment 11. SAFMC SSC Case Studies for SCS7

11.2. Presentation

Case studies document overview – Dr. Genny Nesslage, SSC

11.3. Overview

The National SSC is soliciting regionally representative case studies under three theme topics for the upcoming SCS7 meeting. Regional SSCs are requested to suggest 1-2 case studies from their respective regions to be considered. These suggestions should be made prior to the next Steering Committee meeting on November 19th. The SSC should discuss and decide on 2 case study areas and provide a brief description for each and with which session they align for submission.

11.4. Public Comment

11.5. Action

- Select 2 case studies for the upcoming SCS7 meeting

12. COMPREHENSIVE ABC CONTROL RULE AMENDMENT

12.1. Documents

Attachment 12a. ABC CR Amendment Decision Document

Attachment 12b. ABC CR Amendment Risk Tolerance Analysis Spreadsheet

Attachment 12c. ABC CR P Examples Spreadsheet

*Attachment 12d. ABC CR Amendment Presentation

12.2. Presentation

Updates on ABC control rule amendment – Dr. Mike Schmidtke, SAFMC staff (Late Materials)

Risk Tolerance Analysis Spreadsheet – Dr. Mike Schmidtke, SAFMC Staff

P* Examples Spreadsheet – Dr. Mike Schmidtke, SAFMC Staff (Late Materials)

12.3. Overview

The SSC will be given an update on development of the comprehensive ABC control rule amendment, explanation of considered ABC control rule alternatives, a walk-through of the Risk Tolerance Analysis spreadsheet for determining stock risk ratings, and P* estimates for an example set of stocks. Stock risk ratings are being considered for use in conjunction with biomass information from stock assessments to guide the Council on the level of risk (i.e. P*)

they would consider for each of the species they manage. Resultant P* values would be applied to assessment projections to determine ABC. This is the last scheduled opportunity for the SSC to recommend changes to alternatives that could be incorporated into the amendment. The SSC will then review and finalize recommendations for the method used to derive stock risk ratings. The SSC will also review P* estimates for an example set of stocks under each of the ABC Control Rule alternatives, and review and revise past recommendations for ABC control rule alternatives considered in the amendment, as necessary.

12.4. Public Comment

12.5. Breakout Groups

12.6. Action

- Review updates to the comprehensive ABC control rule amendment.
- Review Risk Tolerance Analysis spreadsheet and determine recommended method for stock risk ratings.
- Review example P* values for stocks using different ABC control rule alternatives.
- Review ABC control rule alternatives and previous recommendations; revise recommendations as necessary.
- Solicit membership for data-limited stocks ABC-setting workgroup.

SSC RECOMMENDATION:

13. OTHER BUSINESS

- Updates on ongoing fishery management plan amendments – SAFMC Staff
- Update on SEDAR78: South Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Assessment review – SAFMC Staff
- Update on SEDAR68: South Atlantic Scamp Operational Assessment – SAFMC Staff

14. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

15. CONSENSUS STATEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEW

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

The Final SSC report will be provided to the Council by 9:00 am on Friday, November 19, 2021 (approximately 3 weeks from the end of the meeting) for inclusion in the briefing book for the December Council meeting.

16. NEXT MEETINGS

16.1. SAFMC SSC MEETINGS

Potential 2022 Meeting Dates:

- (Potential Winter webinar)
- April 2022 in Charleston, SC
- (July/August 2022)

16.2. SAFMC Meetings

2021 Council Meetings

- December 6-10, 2021 in Beaufort, NC

2022 Council Meetings

- March 7-11, 2022 in Jekyll Island, GA

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