

SAFMC SEDAR Committee, March 2018

SEDAR Steering Committee Spring 2018 Meeting

Potential Topics & SAFMC Issues

1) Scamp Research Track Assessment

At the September 2017 meeting the Steering Committee requested that the SEFSC develop a work plan for the Scamp research track assessment to address the project schedule and possible TORs. The Steering Committee also requested that a subset of Gulf and South Atlantic SSC members review the plan of work before the end of 2017, to develop draft TORs and a project schedule for approval by the Councils by mid-2018. The plan of work was not provided, so the SSC subset has not received anything to review. Continued delay in defining the research track approach will likely delay the assessment start.

The Steering Committee will need to provide guidance on the scamp assessment approach.

2) Assessment Priorities

As shown in the SAFMC SEDAR projects update (**Attachment 1**), SAFMC priorities for a full assessment workload (4 projects) are established through 2019. Additionally, the Council has requested a full workload for 2020. All the stocks assessed for SAFMC by the SEFSC are on the current workplan for consideration between now and 2020, with the exception of Blueline Tilefish which was just completed last Fall. If achieved, the current workplan will reduce the average age of SAFMC assessments considerably.

An opening is available for an update or standard in 2021. Staff recommends that the Council not specify a stock to fill this spot now, and instead wait until next year to determine how to fill it. This will allow the Council to respond to unforeseen issues that could develop with a stock over the coming year. There may also be a need for further work on one of the stocks receiving a revision for MRIP data later this year.

There are several unassessed stocks on both the NMFS and SAFMC prioritization lists (**Section III of Attachment 1**) that could be considered for future first time assessments. Identifying one or more of these for consideration in 2023 and beyond would allow time for research projects to be solicited and completed.

Speckled Hind, Goliath Grouper, and Warsaw Grouper are SAMFC level 3 stocks, based on their data and management challenges. Landings are prohibited. They are ranked fairly low by the NMFS priority tool. Several assessments have been attempted for Goliath Grouper, but none have overcome the basic data limitations.

Lane Snapper, Almaco Jack, Knobbed Porgy, Silk Snapper, and Red Hind are SAFMC level 2 stocks. NMFS tool priorities range from 5 to 19 (out of 31 stocks ranked), excepting Tomtate which was not ranked through the NMFS tool. Tomtate, Almaco Jack and Knobbed porgy are among the top 16 species

encountered in SERFS (the Southeast Reef Fish Survey independent monitoring program). Tomtate was the most encountered species in 2016.

Table 1. Average Landings (in whole weight for 2013-2015) of 5 unassessed SAFMC stocks.

Stock	Rec	Comm	Total
Lane Snapper	82,826	2,998	85,824
Almaco Jack	99,953	134,285	234,237
Knobbed Porgy	14,784	19,940	34,724
Silk Snapper	1,981	8,634	10,615
Red Hind	1,664	4,584	6,248

- The Committee could consider requesting that SEFSC provide an evaluation of data availability to support a stock assessment for one or more of these stocks.

The Steering Committee will consider finalizing assessment projects for 2020.

3) MRIP Revision Assessments

Revised MRIP data, incorporating calibrations for the new effort survey and a series of changes in the access point catch survey, will be available in July 2018. Revised assessments will only include new MRIP information – they will not advance the terminal year or make any other changes. The SAFMC has identified 4 recently assessed stocks for revisions to incorporate the new MRIP data: Red Grouper, Blueline Tilefish, Black Sea Bass, and Vermilion Snapper. These stocks were selected based on their relatively recent completion dates and large recreational harvest component. The Gag and Red Porgy assessments planned for completion in 2018 will include the revised MRIP data. The Steering Committee has not discussed the revision process in detail.

Red Grouper was recently assessed, and NMFS determined that the stock was not making adequate rebuilding progress. There is discussion planned during this Council meeting (March 2018) on how to proceed. The Council may be required to have a revised rebuilding plan in place by September 2019, which will require the Council to approve a rebuilding plan amendment by March of 2019. That gives only about 6 months from the time revised MRIP numbers are available and required completion date for a rebuilding plan amendment. Red Grouper should be considered the first priority for MRIP revisions.

- The Committee is asked to consider identifying Red Grouper as the first priority for an MRIP revision assessment to address possible revisions to the rebuilding plan.

The Steering Committee will be asked to provide guidance on the revision assessment approach, and the role SEDAR will play in their development.