Comprehensive ACL Amendment
IPT Meeting minutes – October 29, 2009

Attendees: NMFS SERO: Nikhil Mehta (Lead), Jack McGovern, Kate Michie, Karla Gore, Nick Farmer, Mike Jepsen, Stephen Holiman, Mike Travis, Andy Herndon, and Rich Malinowski.

NMFS Sci. Ctr.: Jim Berkson

SAFMC: Rick DeVictor (Lead)

-Comprehensive ACL amendment will specify ACLs and AMs for species not undergoing overfishing in the snapper-grouper, dolphin wahoo, Sargassum, and shrimp FMPs. ACLs for golden crab will be covered in the golden crab FMP; king mackerel, spanish mackerel, cobia in the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP; and spiny lobster in the spiny lobster FMP.

-The Comprehensive ACL Amendment will use a tiered approach: (1) remove species from FMU; (2) identify any species groups for remaining species; (3) specify ABC control rules for species and species groups; (4) set allocations for species and species groups; (4) specify ACLs and AMs; and (5) specify management measures for species and species groups to ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

Actions and Alternatives discussed:

Action 1. Consider designating some snapper-grouper species as ecosystem component (EC) species.

-Discussion on exploring benefits of designating species as EC vs. removing them from the FMU. IPT believes that even if species are removed from FMU, data would still be collected on landings.

Tasking:
-Nikhil and Rick will put together pros and cons of EC vs. removal from FMU as well as examine guidelines to determine if species can be delegated as ecosystem species based on the magnitude of landings.

Action 2. Remove species with low occurrence in federal waters from the Snapper-Grouper FMU.

-There could be problems with just using MRFSS data to identify what is predominantly used in state waters. However, the data do verify common knowledge that species such as sheepshead are mostly taken in state waters.
-Discussion on exploring state trip ticket data to identify proportion of commercial landings taken if state and federal waters.
-Consider looking at each species and magnitude of landings individually in the snapper-grouper FMU as a sub-alternative.

-Consider species >80% in state landings individually for removal. For example, landings of goliath grouper are very small but that is because harvest is prohibited. The Council would probably not want to assign it to be an ecosystem species.
-Sub-alternative approaches will necessitate "preferreds" in earlier actions, and any alteration will have to trickle down to other actions.
-Combine Actions 1 & 2. Action 2 shows both the magnitude of landings and proportion taken in state waters. Therefore, information is somewhat duplicative.

Tasking:
-Nick will look into state trip tickets.
-Nikhil will include table showing landings (commercial and recreational) for all 73 snapper-grouper species. The table would include all managed snapper-grouper species (except wreckfish) since species experiencing overfishing whose ACLs have been previously defined could be included in species groups.

Action 3. Consider multi-species groupings for specifying ACLs, ACTs, and AMs.

-Discussion on groupings.
-The groups defined by the Shertzer et al. papers are probably too broad if they are to be used for management in addition to specifying ACLs. The Council should examine those alternatives and discuss whether or not they are reasonable.
-Need analyses on grouping species at a finer scale and Council guidance on management measures to deal with results of grouping analyses at finer scales.
-Determination of species groups could be a combination of a quantitative analysis to determine what is caught together and informed judgement. For example, species taken on the same trip might not be caught in the same location. Further, life history information needs to be considered when grouping species that are caught together.
-The Council needs to discuss how the ACLs would be set for a species group. Would there be one ACL for the whole group or multiple ACLs and whichever one is met first would enact an AM?
-Need to factor in vulnerability, PSA analyses after clustering to better define the species groups.
-SSC did not favor Alt. 6 in the past because it did not include any sort of quantitative analysis.
-Add a Framework modification in Am. 17B to allow for moving species among groups as more data are available.

Tasking:
-Nick will do cluster analyses along the lines of those done for Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, and possibly look at PSA.
-Kate M. will adjust framework language in Amendment 17B for Council consideration at their December 2009 meeting. (Completed 10/29/09).

Actions 4 - 24: ABC control rule, Allocations, ACLs, ACTs, AMs, and modify management measures.

-ABC control rules provided by SSC can only be applied to species that have been assessed. The SSC will be working on ABC control rules for data poor species in December 2009.

-Discussion on guidance needed from Council for dolphin and wahoo, discuss grouping these with coastal migratory pelagics. ABC alternatives are included for dolphin and wahoo but the SSC has not provided these values. The IPT will indicate to Council that these are not valid alternatives as the NS1 guidelines indicate the SSC will provide values for ABC.
-The ABC alternative for Dolphin and Wahoo indicate the value would apply to the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean; however, the FMP is only for the Atlantic. Need to point this out to Council. It is unlikely that this FMP can assign ABCs outside the Atlantic.
-Add percentages to alternatives under allocations.
-Consider Sargassum as an annual crop or EC species. If Sargassum is an annual crop, no ACL action is needed for this species. Just need an AM action. We need to ask if we really need to have an allocation action for this species. How can we determine allocations based on historical landings when there are no landings?
-Royal red shrimp should not be in the list of species covered in this amendment. Royal red shrimp is not in the Shrimp FMU.
-Add shrimp under actions covering AMs; however, because all the species in the FMU are annual crops no ACL action is needed.
-The text in the ACL and AM alternatives for dolphin and wahoo needs to be cleaned up.

Tasking:
-Nikhil will look whether Sargassum can be classified as an annual crop or EC.
-Nikhil will remove royal red shrimp from the list of species, and the other 4 species of shrimp under actions covering AMs.
-Rick will confer with Gregg Waugh regarding dolphin and wahoo, and the need to have ABC alternatives as per SSC guidance.
Rick will look into adding percentages to alternatives under actions covering allocations.
-Nikhil will clean up the text in alternatives for dolphin and wahoo.

Points to bring forward to the Council in December, 2009
1. EC vs. Remove from FMU
2. Reword Action 2, or combine Actions 1 & 2
3. ABC control rule from SSC for un-assessed species
4. Management measure to be used for dealing with species groupings likely at a finer scale than Shertzer el al. analysis. Need to determine how ACLs will be set in a species group and whether one ACL or multiple ACLs would trigger an AM.
5. Add framework modification to Amendment 17B to allow species to be moved from different groups
6. Provide guidance for dolphin/wahoo ABC, ACLs, ACTs, and AMs, and indicate values should only apply to the geographic range (Atlantic) managed under the FMP.
7. Remove action for ACL for Sargassum in this amendment if it is an annual crop, and/or EC species. Consider removal of allocation action because there is nothing to allocate. There has been a little bit of historical harvest and it has all been commercial.