Comprehensive ACL Amendment
IPT Meeting minutes – January 13, 2010

Attendees: NMFS SERO: Nikhil Mehta (Lead), Jack McGovern, Kate Michie, Karla Gore, Andy Strelcheck, Nick Farmer, Mike Jepson, Stephen Holiman, Mike Travis, Monica Smit-Brunello, David Keys, David Dale, Andy Herndon, and Rich Malinowski.

NMFS Sci. Ctr.:

SAFMC: Rick DeVictor (Lead), Kari Fenske

-The Comprehensive ACL Amendment will use a tiered approach: (1) remove species from FMU; (2) identify ecosystem component species; (3) identify any species groups for remaining species; (4) specify ABC control rules for species and species groups; (5) set allocations for species and species groups; (6) specify ACLs and AMs; and (7) 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.

The IPT suggested that Action 2 (to remove species from the FMU) should be first in the document before consideration of whether or not a species should be considered as qualifying for ecosystem component.
-Discussion on whether rarely encountered species can be included as EC species (for example, tiger grouper). GC confirmed on 1/15/2010, that management measures such as bag/size limits, etc. should not be regulated towards EC species, however, harvest could be prohibited. GC will continue to provide advice as needed. IPT indicated that the Council will have to discuss this at the March meeting and determine which species would fit the definition of ecosystem component species.

Tasking:
- 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.
- Nikhil will add NS 1 guidelines for EC to the document. (Completed 01/2010)

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

-Discussion on exploring state trip ticket data to identify proportion of commercial landings taken if state and federal waters.
-Re-word Alternative 5 saying, "remove all of the following species…"(Completed 01/2010)
-Change Action 2 to Action 1, remove species from FMU first, then look at EC species. (Completed 01/2010)
-Add language into draft DEIS for this amendment regarding federal and state regulations.

Tasking:
-Nick/Andy S. will look into state trip ticket data. Nikhil will incorporate data (when available) into document in tabular format.
-Nikhil will incorporate all editorial changes. (Partially completed 01/2010)

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

-Discussion on groupings, Nick briefly outlined the strategy used for the Gulf and Caribbean ACL 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. Alternative 3 needs to specify fish species that might fall into the 3 zones mentioned.

Tasking:
-Nick will do cluster analyses along the lines of those done for Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, and possibly look at PSA analyses. (In progress).
-Nick might present relevant summary regarding the approach used in Gulf of Mexico species grouping, to S. Atlantic SSC as well as to the Council.

Actions 4 - 28: ABC control rule, Allocations, ACLs, ACTs, AMs, and modify management measures.

-The SSC will deliver ABC control rule for data poor species in April 2010. Alternatives regarding these actions will be discussed after this is done.
-Action 5, put "unknown" in addition to "not undergoing overfishing" in the text for alternatives under this action. Alternative 2 needs to say "2006-2008" in its text. This needs to be done for allocation alternatives for other FMPs in text. (Completed 01/2010)
Discussion about *Sargassum* and consideration as an EC species. Some discussion that it is unlikely that a species that has its own FMP could be considered as an EC species. The Council would have to withdraw the FMP. The Council should also discuss whether or not *Sargassum* is an annual crop.

Tasking:
-Nikhil and Rick will incorporate guidance from ABC control rule for data poor species into developing the alternatives for these actions.
-Nikhil will incorporate all editorial comments. (Partially completed 01/2010)

Discussion on if golden crab should be included in this amendment. Need to check with Council.

Discussion on completing the NEPA threshold checklist, start thinking about EIS or EA for this amendment.

Tasking:
-Nikhil will send out the NEPA threshold checklist to the IPT along with the NOI, summarize the input received, and inform the IPT. (Completed 01/2010)
Result: 4 inputs, all recommend EIS.

Timeline:
1. Staff/Team prepare analyses of ecosystem species designation by May 12, 2009. (completed)
2. Committee/Council review and provide guidance – June 2009 meeting (completed)
3. Staff/Team continue to work on draft amendment document during 2009. (completed)
4. Committee/Council review and provide guidance during 2009. (completed)
5. SSC provides OFL/ABC recommendations by April 2010.
6. Committee/Council review and provide guidance – June & September 2010 meeting.
7. Approve document for public hearings – December 2010.
8. Public hearings & DEIS review – January/February 2011.
9. Committee/Council review public hearing input and approve actions – April 2011.
10. Committee/Council review and approve final document – June 2011.

Points to bring forward to the Council in March, 2010
1. EC vs. Remove from FMU, pick the specific species
2. ABC control rule from SSC for un-assessed species
3. Nick's species groupings.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Should golden crab be added into this amendment?