

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**



### **SSC Meeting Overview**

**April 3-5, 2012**

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Savannah, GA**

**VERSION  
FINAL REPORT**

## **PURPOSE**

This meeting is convened to:

- Review ABC recommendations and the ABC control rule
- Review revised recreational catch estimates
- Review CEBA 3
- Review the SAFMC research plan
- Consider an SSC peer review process

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**Documents:**

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- Attachment 2. 2012 Update Info
- Attachment 3. MRAG Monitoring Principles
- Attachment 4. ORCS Report
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- Attachment 6. ORCS Application
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- Attachment 17. Regional Operating Agreement.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Documents

Agenda

Minutes, November 2011

### 1.2. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

***Agenda item 7, Boyles Law was originally requested by the Socio-Economic Panel for review at its next meeting. As such, this item was removed from the agenda and the agenda was approved.***

Approve Minutes

***Minutes from the November 2011 meeting were approved.***

## 2. SEDAR Activities Update

### 2.1. Documents

Attachment 1. SEDAR project schedule

Attachment 2. 2012 Update Info

### 2.2. Overview

SEDAR 28, South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Spanish mackerel and cobia is underway. The Data workshop is completed and the Assessment workshop will be held in May.

Update Assessments of South Atlantic vermilion snapper and red porgy are planned for 2012. They are expected to begin later in the year, once final data for 2011 are available, and be provided to the SSC for review at the October 2012 meeting. The SSC is asked to comment on and approve the update TORs (Attachment 2).

### 2.3. Action

- Comment on TORs for vermilion snapper and red porgy updates

### SSC RECOMMENDATION:

***The SSC asked why red porgy was being done as an update and not as a benchmark or standard assessment. Council staff indicated it was due to the lack of new info and because the model that was used for the assessment is already a BAM construct. Since red porgy are on a rebuilding schedule, an update needs to be run to see if the stock is on track with rebuilding.***

***A suggestion was made to include some level of ecosystem discussion or modeling as a TOR. The Mid-Atlantic currently has a TOR for including some level of discussion. The goal is to try and separate natural mortality into M1 (predation) and M2 (everything else). If it cannot be derived, there is the option for the SSC to add opinions on the importance of a particular species in the ecosystem if it is not specifically discussed within the assessment.***

***Another suggestion was to include a TOR for addressing the MRFSS/MRIP conversions that were discussed during the MRIP Calibration Meeting held during the previous week. The SSC discussed the issue and recommended waiting until the report from the calibration meeting was available so that specific guidance was available for implementation and incorporation in the future assessments.***

### **3. Fisheries Monitoring Principles**

#### **3.1. Documents**

Attachment 3. MRAG Monitoring Principles

#### **3.2. Overview**

The consulting group MRAG Americas has a project to develop guiding principles for fisheries monitoring (Attachment 3). They requested this opportunity to present findings to the SSC.

#### **3.3. Presentation**

Monitoring Principles, Bob Trumble, MRAG Americas

#### **3.4. Action**

- Comment on the approach and provide recommendations on use

#### **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

***The SSC felt the selling point that needs to be addressed is how a monitoring program will affect the future tracking of ACLs. Selling a monitoring program will greatly benefit from how this program will affect the tracking of ACLs. What criteria would be used to rank these monitoring programs? How do we demonstrate their value? Perhaps can relate it to the reduction in uncertainty and lower buffers between ABCs and ACLs.***

***Monitoring ACLs is likely one of the most important goals for these types of programs. There will probably be more evolution and evaluation of existing monitoring programs as opposed to the development of new programs. MRAG approach can work very***

*well for this evolutionary process. It can also be used to look at the overall monitoring process in a region and make it more efficient.*

*If the goal is to present to the process to the Council and have Science Center approval and adoption of this method, should customize it to the specific regions. Too general at present for the stakeholders to see how it relates to them. Not operational at this point. Here in SE, there is a very large recreational component to fisheries, leading to some challenges in developing a monitoring program. Need to prioritize fishery independent vs. fishery dependent here in SE. Customization to the particular regions is the key to making progress with this process.*

*A the SSC discussed the need for prioritizing fishery-independent monitoring programs for the South Atlantic, it was ironic that Dr. Reichert pointed out that MARMAP has received a 40% reduction in funds. Reduction in funding will obviously affect MARMAPs ability to provide high quantities and high quality data.*

*This type of focus would require bringing in regional experts to work together, therefore taking the first steps outlined in the MRAG process. This is not the proper role of an outside entity, unless specifically tasked to do that by the council or the science center.*

*Must be wary of cost recovery and cost distribution. Will have profound effects, both positive and negative. Must be careful about programs such as the one mentioned in Canada where they used data from fishermen who volunteer for observer coverage. May bias the data towards those who are better at targeting, since they will be more likely to volunteer.*

*The South Atlantic does not have a sampling protocol for its assessments and no increase in sampling for an increase in managed species. If landings are the only data available, then the South Atlantic needs to have the best estimates of those values. It was suggested that the Science Center be asked for a sampling protocol on some of the most important species. The SSC should be able to obtain this information from the Science Center if they rely heavily on the use of this information for determining ABCs and making other important decisions.*

*To date, none of the regions have implemented this procedure.*

*Now that assessment throughput has been addressed by the center, the problem of implementing a monitoring protocol needs*

***to be addressed and set of procedures need to be developed. Perhaps The South Atlantic can use this opportunity and the MRAG procedure to address the problem of improving our sampling protocol in the South Atlantic.***

***Because of funding limitations, implementation of sampling protocols in the SE has been lacking. Perhaps the data collection committee, who is tasked with putting data monitoring protocols into FMPs is the best route to go about improving data collection.***

***The SSC suggested coordinating a workshop that brings together experts from the South Atlantic who can evaluate how much it would cost to improve data collection to a point that will make it appropriate for tracking quotas and doing assessments. Then, if resources become available, The Council will have a plan of where it can go to improve monitoring.***

***The Science Center needs to supply feedback to the Council on how actions in FMPs dealing with monitoring are being implemented and addressed.***

***Need to prioritize fisheries and data needs, perhaps by how much it will help SSC and managers make decisions on important stocks.***

## **4. ABC Control Rule Modifications**

### **4.1. Documents**

Attachment 4. ORCS Report  
Attachment 5. SAFMC ORCS Subcommittee report  
Attachment 6. ORCS Application

### **4.2. Overview**

The SSC reviewed the ORCS report (Attachment 4) at the previous meeting and convened a subcommittee to consider modifications to the SAFMC ABC control rule in response. The subcommittee met via conference call and discussed how the ORCS principles could be included (Attachment 5). Mike Errigo, SAFMC Staff, prepared an initial exploratory application of the ORCS principles as discussed by the Subcommittee (Attachment 6).

### **4.3. Presentations**

ORCS Subcommittee Report and Recommendations: Luiz Barbieri  
ORCS Application: Mike Errigo

#### 4.4. ACTIONS

- Consider modifying the ABC control rule

#### **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

*The SSC supported adopting the ORCS approach for tier 4 stocks since it is a peer-reviewed methodology, as opposed to the ad hoc methods the SSC has explored and previously applied.*

*The committee expressed some concerns about stocks that have the potential to be tier 3 being treated as tier 4 because no time or resources are available to do the higher tier analysis. Some of these stocks seem to have reliable fishery-independent data and it would be unfavorable to categorize them as ORCS stocks. Perhaps this is better addressed in the SEDAR framework as a change in how the SEDAR Steering Committee prioritizes assessments and decides which SEDAR tier to use for specific assessments. The SSC suggested prioritizing stocks, as is being done at the national level. Also, it would be beneficial to go through all stocks and decide what type of assessment is possible for each stock. The SSC is willing to help with this process.*

*Application of the ORCS approach is not straightforward and requires use of expert judgment. The presence of assessed stocks is very helpful in the utility of this approach. Integration of PSA into the ORCS approach is favorable and can help save time and work, since much analysis has already been done by MRAG. Also, weighting of criteria, especially if they are going to be combined using the MRAG PSA scoring, will have to be discussed in more detail. The process should carefully document where all these numbers came from and how they were derived.*

*The SSC recommended a workshop be scheduled so the committee can develop the scores of ORCS attributes for all unassessed stocks and identify the statistic to be used as a metric of historical catch. Holding this workshop in the summer would allow the committee to have finalized ABC recommendations to be discussed and approved at the October meeting. As suggested above it would also be very beneficial to use this workshop to categorize each species as to its assessment potential based on the available data. Use of webinars to allow additional scientific input may be necessary given the amount of expert opinion required. The Committee recommends that a brief presentation be given at the*



***June Council meeting so Council input on management risk can be incorporated into the process. A Steering Committee for the proposed ORCS workshop includes Luiz Barbieri, Jim Berkson, Chip Collier, Marcel Reichert, and Eric Johnson.***

## **5. Review of Landings and ABCs**

### **5.1. Documents**

Attachment 7. Existing ABC Recommendations  
Attachment 8. Overview of MRIP revisions  
Attachment 9. South Atlantic MRIP Presentation  
Attachment 10. Updated landings trends  
Attachment 11. Final tilefish projections

NOTE: There are 2 spreadsheet companions to Attachment 10.

### **5.2. Overview**

The SSC is asked to review current landings trends, current ABC recommendations, and consider possible ABC modifications in response to changes in trends, changes in input values, or changes in the ABC control rule process. Existing ABC recommendations, their basis, and date of SSC recommendation are summarized in Attachment 7. Also included in this attachment are excerpts from recent amendments where OFL, ABC, ACL, ACT, and AMs were specified, including the Comprehensive ACL amendment and Snapper-Grouper Amendments 17B and 24.

Revised ABCs are not required at this meeting. Moreover, some information that is pertinent to any ABC revisions, such as possible revised MRIP estimates prior to 1999, is not available at this time (Attachment 8, Attachment 9). Therefore, the committee may wish to discuss the issues below that may influence future ABC recommendations and develop a process for making revisions at the next meeting (scheduled for October 2012). The Committee should also discuss long-term strategies for updating ABC recommendations.

One concern affecting the timing of ABC recommendations is the process the SERO will apply when monitoring 2012 fisheries and evaluating existing ACLs. How monitoring can be affected is discussed for each item below. No final decision regarding monitoring of 2012 recreational landings has been provided.

Issues to discuss during this topic include:

- Inclusion of shore mode landings

Shore based landings were inadvertently omitted from the ACL database available to the SSC when ABC were specified for many unassessed stocks in April 2011. Therefore, existing ABCs do not reflect the complete landings of these species and are lower than the actual reported landings. SERO has indicated that landings could be monitored in 2012 by omitting shore-based modes.

- Revised MRIP estimates  
Revised recreational estimates for 2004-2011 were recently released by the MRIP program. Standard queries now return estimates based on the revised procedures. The SSC is provided a comparison of the new and old values for managed stocks (Attachment 10), and an overview presentation of the changes provided at the March 2012 Council meeting by SERO staff (Attachment 9). SERO has indicated that 2012 monitoring could be conducted using estimates based on the MRFSS process. This is only feasible in 2012, as the MRFSS equivalent values will not be available beyond this year.
- Preliminary calibration workshop recommendations  
A SEDAR-MRIP workshop is planned for March 27-29 to discuss further calibration of MRFSS to MRIP estimates. The 1998-2003 period is expected to be the initial focus. Participants will be asked to recommend whether calibration is possible during these years, and, if so, methods to consider. An independent peer review will be conducted and final results are expected by July 1, 2012.
- ABC control rule application  
The SSC directed that a subcommittee consider modifications to the ABC control rule in response to the ORCS committee report. Subcommittee recommendations are provided for discussion. The SSC may wish to consider revising ABC recommendations if the ABC control rule is modified.
- Stocks added back to the Fishery Management Unit (FMU) in August 2011  
The SAFMC added several stocks back to the Snapper-Grouper FMU following the SSC meeting of April 2011. These stocks were not reviewed under the data poor tier as derived in April 2011. Council established an ABC equivalent to the third-highest value for 1999-2008 in the Comprehensive ACL amendment as submitted in Fall 2011 and recently approved. The SSC is asked to review trends for these stocks, as was done for other unassessed stocks in April 2011, and consider possible ABC recommendations.
- Time-specific ABCs provided previously  
Initial ABC recommendations were made over several years. During that time the amount of agency guidance available increased and the ABC control rule evolved. Therefore, some of the earliest ABCs may not be specified in the same manner or based on the same principles as some provided later in the process. Additionally, in some cases the SSC provided ABCs based on time sensitive information, such as stock projections. Such recommendations may not be valid beyond a certain

period of time, although such periods have seldom been formally established by the SSC. The SSC is asked to consider whether some ABC recommendations should be revised and whether time-specific limits should be placed on ABC recommendations. For an example, the SSC reviewed assessments of black sea bass and golden tilefish in November 2011. Black sea bass ABCs were recommended with a specific time limitation of 2 years based on projection uncertainty. Final projections were not available at that time so the SSC could recommend only an approach and  $P^*$ , and did not recommend a time-specific ABC for tilefish.

### 5.3. Presentations

Overview and Issues: John Carmichael  
SAFMC Landings Trends: Mike Errigo

### 5.4. ACTIONS

- Recommend how to address the omitted shore-based landings for ABC recommendations.
- Recommend how to address revised MRIP estimates for ABC recommendations.
- Recommend how to address changes in the ABC control rule, if changes are proposed, for developing ABC recommendations.
- Consider how to address ABC recommendations for stocks added to the FMU after April 2011.
- Recommend how to address time-specific aspects of existing ABC recommendations.
- Provide guidance on ABC monitoring approaches for 2012.

### **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

***The SSC recommended that ABC recommendations be revised to include recreational shore-based landings data. However, the Committee suggested that revision of ABCs be accomplished at the Fall SSC meeting using the most up to date data and the ORCS methodology which should be finalized at the workshop being proposed for this summer.***

***Since the summer ORCS workshop will be held after the MRIP calibration report is released, the SSC recommended that this topic be dealt with at that workshop. Additions topics to be discussed at the ORCS workshop include: how to address changes in the ABC control for developing ABC recommendations, and addressing ABC recommendations for stocks added back in to the FMU after April 2011.***

***Traditionally an ABC remains unchanged until a new stock assessment is released or some other data or analysis change warrants an ABC update. The SSC discussed the fact that it needs to be more explicit when setting an ABC as to what it applies to, the timeframe involved, and the potential need for monitoring or additional data. May also need to specify what needs to be looked at in the next round, say if there is a concern for setting an ABC into the future (ex. BSB).***

***The SSC recommended developing a table of tracking ABCs (separate tabs for assessed and unassessed species) so the SSC will know what to look at, when, and why. Need to know what information/data was used to determine an ABC so it can be reviewed each year.***

***The SSC recommended the use of MRFSS estimates for monitoring 2012 ACLs. Do not include shore mode for tracking ACL, but do include the shore mode when recalculating ABCs as well as for future ACL monitoring.***

## **6. CEBA 3**

### **6.1. Documents**

Attachment 12. CEBA 3 Options

Attachment 13. SAFMC Letter on deep water species approaches

## 6.2. Overview

Staff Contact: Anna Martin

1. Expansion of Coral HAPCs - Anna Martin (CE-BA 3 document lead)
2. Speckled Hind and Warsaw Grouper protections – Myra Brouwer
3. Permits and Data Reporting – Gregg Waugh

In CE-BA 3, the Council is addressing place-based management measures and improvements in tracking of annual catch limits. CE-BA 3 was approved for public scoping during the December 2011 Council meeting, scoping meetings were held in January/February 2012, and the measures were further refined at the March 2012 Council meeting. Measures being developed in CE-BA 3 include: expanding Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs); establishing MPAs across the mid-shelf for speckled hind and Warsaw grouper; and modifying permits, data reporting (for-hire and commercial sectors), and bycatch monitoring to ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

Among options the Council is considering as alternatives to the depth based closure proposed for removal through Snapper-Grouper Regulatory Amendment 11 are focused spatial closures directed at speckled hind and Warsaw grouper. The SSC is asked to carefully consider the information available to support such closures, as well as best scientific practices that can be used to guide their size and location.

The SAFMC Staff presentation will outline a simplified approach based on the known occurrence of speckled hind to target the extent and areas of closure. This is outlined in the CE-BA 3 Options Paper. Modifications to existing MPAs and/or specification of new MPAs will be influenced by targeting the inclusion of known Warsaw grouper occurrence, spawning locations for speckled hind/Warsaw grouper, and habitat for these two species. The intent of this approach is to add the occurrence data to the existing habitat data on the Council's IMS system and allow the public to use this system to develop their own recommendations for potential MPA sites. The staff presentation will allow the SSC to view the occurrence/habitat data directly through a GIS application. The SSC is asked to provide guidance on what percentage to be targeted (Council is evaluating 20%, 30% and 40%).

NMFS SERO staff will provide a presentation that considers occurrence observations along with habitat and bathymetry data to quantify areas where the species may be expected to occur along with those where they have been observed to occur. This presentation builds on information provided to the SSC in November 2011, in support of Regulatory Amendment 11, and includes some additional analyses intended to refine the spatial resolution of the available data. The approach is detailed in the attached presentation in the briefing documents, with supporting

documentation and references located in the references documents folder.

The SSC is asked to review the data available on landings and locations of the deepwater species speckled hind and Warsaw grouper.

6.3. CEBA-3 Schedule

NOI .....	
Scoping Complete .....	January/February 2012
Council reviews options & makes recommendations.....	March/June 2012
SSC review.....	April 2012
APs review .....	April/May 2012
Council review & approve for Public Hearing.....	June 2012
Public Hearings.....	August 2012
SSC Final review .....	October 2012
Final Review & Submission .....	September or December 2012
Regulations implemented.....	2013

6.4. Presentations

- Overview and Issues: Anna Martin
- Deepwater species data and approach: Roger Pugliese, SAFMC
- Deepwater species data and alternatives: Nick Famer, SERO

6.5. ACTIONS

Provide a recommendation for each action, as appropriate. If no recommendation is provided, state why the issue is not addressed (i.e., it is an administrative action and the SSC has no input).

The SSC may provide input on any other items pertaining to the amendment.

- Review options for expansion of Coral HAPCs as recommended by the Coral AP and shrimp industry representatives.
- Review approaches for evaluating possible closed areas for speckled hind and Warsaw grouper.
- Provide guidance on placing and evaluating closed areas that will protect speckled hind and Warsaw grouper.
- Provide recommendations or guidance for the amount of area to be closed.
- Provide recommendations for monitoring deepwater species.

**SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

***It is still early in the process and the SSC wanted to wait for the APs and others to weigh in on this issue before providing its comments. One point for consideration is the fact it is easier for fishermen to***

***keep track of a closed area if it follows depth contours instead of straight lines on a map.***

***Another suggestion from the SSC was to consider approaching the creation of MPAs as ecosystem MPAs instead of just speckled hind and Warsaw grouper MPAs. Can use occurrence and habitat of these two species as important parameters in a multi-parameter framework.***

***The two approaches presented by Roger Pugliese and Nick Farmer appear to be complementary in nature; however, it is possible that the approaches may yield disjoint/non-overlapping results. Perhaps presenting a suite of results is the best approach to this problem. Roger's approach allows for fishermen's input, which is key to achieving buy in. Nick's approach currently looks at abundance distributions of the two species relative to fishery-independent and fishery-dependent data. Both approaches have strong merit for use.***

***Suggestions for Nick's analysis include: the incorporation of temporal analysis to see if any shifts in occurrence exist; a sensitivity analysis of the importance of each dataset to the outcome; consideration of the appropriateness of weighting datasets and determination of how to weight them; development of a decision table for the Council (policy makers); may need to focus on associated target species along with the abundance of speckled hind and Warsaw grouper.***

***Given all of the current regulations that affect other snapper-grouper species, it is possible overfishing for speckled hind and Warsaw grouper is no longer occurring. An analysis of the regulations for co-occurring species and the reduction in landings/effort for those species may provide some data on how much bycatch of speckled hind and Warsaw grouper has been reduced. Additionally, an analysis of the associated fisheries and how they are prosecuted could provide information on the level of bycatch.***

***The SSC recommended a habitat modeling exercise also be run to determine where species may have occurred and no longer occur. The model would include habitat covariates (i.e., bathymetry, rugosity, oceanographic/environmental variables, co-occurring species) along with information on the presence of the two species to determine if it is possible to determine where they occurred prior to their extirpation. This could offer a better informed basis for MPA site selection.***

***The SSC did not feel it had the necessary information to comment on the amount of area that would need to be closed, nor did they feel the amount of area closed was directly related to a similar amount of biological gain. Currently, the approaches presented do not take into consideration any of the Biological Reference Points. 30% SPR is the overfished definition. How do you relate closed area to SPR? Closing 20% of the habitat or points does not equate to 20% SPR. There isn't enough scientific backing to say closures will do what managers need them to do. The SSC suggested that a management strategy evaluation analysis make provide insight into potential impacts of closures. Even a simulation study that can show the relative impacts of different strategies would help guide this process. Currently, there is no analysis that shows any conservation benefits of closures to these species.***

***Speckled hind and Warsaw grouper are so rare that traditional BRP reference point methods just don't apply. Currently, they are being managed in the traditional manner with the traditional BRPs. There should be something akin to a rebuilding plan, with projections showing how we will get back to 30% SPR for these species. Where are we now? How far do we need to go? After a 20 year prohibition on these species, it is still possible that sufficient recovery of biomass has not occurred. Speckled hind and Warsaw grouper were not considered overfished, however, overfishing was occurring. Without adequate data and/or a more current assessment the overfishing definition remains. Need a new way to approach the problem. Council needs to make policy decisions about how it wants to manage these species. An adaptive management approach that incorporates some form of monitoring may help assess the utility of the MPAs.***

***If speckled hind and Warsaw grouper cannot be managed via BRPs, then perhaps MPAs are a good alternative, as a simple prohibition does not address issues of bycatch and the bycatch mortality associated with barotrauma. Until guidance is given by the Council to look at other non-BRP based management for speckled hind and Warsaw grouper, the SSC is bound to evaluate management strategies using the traditional methods, which is not possible at this time. Consulting with the speckled hind and Warsaw working groups/APs may yield alternative ways to manage these species.***

***The SSC recommends an expansion of the fishery-independent data collection as well as an increase in observer coverage. The main focus should be on the expansion of the observer program. In***



***determining the amount of coverage, the entire complex of fisheries in the South Atlantic would need to be looked at. Two suggested starting points for guidance include the Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) from the northeast and/or the ACCSP bycatch module. Need to stress the need for an assessment of speckled hind and Warsaw grouper as well as the necessary data to perform these assessments.***

### **CONSENSUS STATEMENTS**

***It is possible that SH and WG are not undergoing overfishing, given all the regulations for associated species and the current analysis from the Regional Office; however, there is not sufficient evidence to indicate overfishing has ended. Additional closed areas could further decrease bycatch mortality beyond current levels.***

***Based on the current info, the SSC cannot determine what benefits an additional closure will provide to the stocks of SH and WG, what amount of area closure is necessary to reduce bycatch mortality, or if additional closed areas are even necessary.***

***Additional monitoring and data needs to be collected in order to be able to conduct an assessment of these species.***

## **7. Review Boyle's Law**

### **7.1. Documents**

Attachment 14. Allocation Committee Excerpt

### **7.2. Overview**

"Boyle's Law" is a method of allocating fishery yield among different sectors while balancing current and historical participation as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act. It was devised by the SAFMC Allocation Committee, and attributed to member Robert Boyles. The casual moniker stuck to the method and often appears in committee discussion, although the method is not officially named. An excerpt from the committee minutes is provided with the documents (Attachment 14), and the full committee minutes are included in the reference document. It is based on a combination of short-term and long-term catch averages by sector, calculated as follows:

Sector apportionment = (50% \* average of long catch range (lbs) 1999-2008) + (50% \* average of recent catch (lbs) 2006-2008).

(NOTE: Actual time periods may vary by species)

### 7.3. ACTIONS

- Comment and provide recommendations on this approach vs. other methods.

#### **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

***Discussion of this agenda item was postponed so the SSC can receive input from the SEP before full committee discussion.***

## **8. Assessment and Technical Analysis Peer Review**

### 8.1. Documents

Attachment 15. SSC Job Description

### 8.2. Overview

At the November 2011 meeting the SSC asked that time be allotted during the next meeting for a discussion of the SSC peer review process for technical analyses. Analyses reviewed by the SSC include stock assessments, such as Standard and Update assessments through SEDAR or assessments conducted by other organizations, and management alternative evaluations in FMP Amendments. The SAFMC SSC does not currently have a formal peer review process or document submission guidelines. Process recommendations of the SSC will be presented to the SSC Selection Committee for consideration and approval. Issues to consider in this discussion include:

- TORs for reviews
- Document submission guidelines and deadlines
- Use of SSC sub-committees to develop recommendations
- Types of documents to be reviewed
- Presentation needs and expectations

### 8.3. ACTIONS

- Recommend a peer review process

#### **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

***There is a difference between an ORCS stock and an independent outside assessment. Perhaps a decision tree is required for dealing with issues of differing complexity.***

***May want to reconvene the Biological sub-panel and create 1 or 2 other sub-panels to deal with recurring issues.***

***This process should be integrated into what is currently in place for other bodies.***

***Currently, reviews and such are done ad hoc. There is no process to deal with these types of issues.***

***An after-the-fact review/analysis may not be appropriate. Need to know what is happening and may need to get involved from the beginning of the process.***

***In NE and on the west coast, the SSC does not review outside assessments. It must have gone through review before coming to the SSC.***

***Perhaps all assessments must be done through the SEDAR process. Not necessarily by center scientists, but should follow the process outlined by SEDAR.***

***A lot of decisions made during an analysis are hard to review after the fact.***

***What about simpler analyses, such as DCAC? It would be much more efficient to have an analyst get the assessment done, and then send it through the SEDAR process just for review (a desk review perhaps). Should be coordinated through the SEDAR process, but perhaps not a full 3 workshop SEDAR.***

***Seems much to require a small analysis to go through the SEDAR process before the info can be used. If there is useful info available to use for deciding on an ABC or whatnot, there should be a method of reviewing it and using it in a timely fashion. Maybe ad hoc committees are not a bad idea.***

***For outside assessments, a triage group convenes to decide if the method has merit. If not, stops there, if yes, it is put forward to the center for data validation and formal review. Where should the triage group come from?***

***This is a complicated question with a more complicated answer. Trying to create a decision tree should be the first step.***

***Setting up a separate review process seems redundant and unduly complicated.***

***SSC not obligated for a full review, just an initial screening process. If a full review is warranted, then it can go through the appropriate avenues.***

***SEDAR is a process, a framework, where an analysis from any source can be vetted.***

***Anything that is an assessment should come to the SSC through SEDAR. Other analyses can come to the SSC directly for review.***

***SEDAR should develop another category of assessment for simpler analyses with its own set of TORs.***

***Other types of analyses:***

***If there is documentation with the appropriate amount of info, then the SSC is willing and able to perform a review of the analysis. These should be handled on a case-by-case basis and the basis could be based on the level of impact to the fishery in question. An oversight committee can make this type of decision in prioritizing these analyses for SSC review.***

***What about reviewing documents/analyses that needs a review but cannot wait till the next SSC meeting? A discussion for another time.***

***If an analysis requires more review than can be given at the SSC meeting, then a sub-committee will be convened to review the analysis in conjunction with a validation from the center and recommendations will be brought to the full SSC.***

## **9. SAFMC Research Prioritization Plan**

### **9.1. Documents**

Attachment 16. SAFMC Research Plan 2012.

### **9.2. Overview**

The Revised MSA requires that Councils regularly provide prioritized research needs to NOAA Fisheries. Plans addressing SAFMC needs are prepared annually, reviewed by the SSC, and approved by the Council. The SSC is asked to comment on the current version (Attachment 16).

### **9.3. ACTIONS**

- Review and comment on the plan

## **SSC RECOMMENDATION:**

***The SSC recommends that language in the ‘South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Prioritization Plan for 2012-2016’ read: “The South Atlantic Council requests that NMFS provide an annual progress report detailing efforts to implement the research recommendations noted in annual Council Research and Monitoring Reports. This report should be provided by June 1 of each year for consideration as the Council develops its annual research prioritization”.***

***The SSC also makes the following specific suggestions:***

- ***Add speckled hind, Warsaw grouper, and Goliath grouper to a new category for special case species where there isn't even a record of reliable catch but which need some sort of assessment completed. Red Snapper may also fit into this new category, at least in the current situation of there being no catch.***
- ***Add Blueline tilefish, Rock Hind, and Red Hind to the secondary data collection species.***
- ***Use trends in landings/population to help determine which data collection category a species belongs in.***
- ***Better define the criteria for listing species in one of the data collection categories.***

## **10. Information and Updates**

### 10.1. Documents

Attachment 17. Regional Operating Agreement.

### 10.2. FMP REPORTS

Staff contact: Gregg Waugh

10.2.1. Coastal Migratory Pelagic Update

10.2.2. Snapper Grouper Amendments Update

10.2.3. Golden Crab

The SEP would like to look at the voluntary IFQ program at their Oct meeting.

### 10.3. SEDAR

SEDAR 28, Gulf and South Atlantic Spanish mackerel and cobia  
Assessment Workshop: May 7-11, Miami FL  
Review Workshop: August 6-10, Atlanta GA

### 10.4. SAFMC

- A. June 11-15, 2012 – Florida
- B. September 10-14, 2012 – South Carolina
- C. December 3-7, 2012 – North Carolina

***Request: The SSC requests an overview of all ongoing research programs related to South Atlantic Red Snapper.***

## **11. Other Business**

## **12. Report and Recommendations Review**

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

The Final SSC report should be provided to the Council by April 23, 2012.

***Deadline of Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> for all comments related to consensus statements and notes for the final report.***

## **13. Chair and Vice-Chair Elections**

***Nominate Luiz Barbieri as SSC Chair. Approved by SSC.***

***Nominate Marcel Reichert and Churchill Grimes (declined nomination). Marcel approved as Vice-Chair by the SSC.***

## **14. Next SSC Meeting**

October 23 - 25, 2012, Charleston SC

Expected Topics

- Review SEDAR 28, Spanish Mackerel & Cobia Benchmark Assessments
- Review updates of Vermilion Snapper & Red Porgy
- Final Review CEBA-3
- Final Review Shrimp Amendment 9
- Final Review Mackerel Amendment 19 and Mackerel Amendment 20
- Final Review Joint Dealer Amendment
- Provide ABC Recommendations