



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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## OVERVIEW

### SAFMC SEDAR COMMITTEE

March 1, 2010  
Jekyll Island Club  
Jekyll Island, GA

Item to be addressed at this meeting: (1) review actions of the February 2010 SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting; (2) discuss the SEDAR appointment and approval process; (3) consider conflict of interest policies; (4) make appointments for SEDAR 23, Goliath grouper benchmark; and (5) provide guidance for the May 2010 Steering Committee Meeting.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

2. **Approval of Minutes**

The Committee last met in June 2009.

3. **SEDAR Steering Committee Report**

The SEDAR Steering Committee met via conference call on February 8, 2010. Findings and recommendations will be summarized (**Attachment 1, 2**).

4. **SEDAR Participant Appointment Process**

The SAFMC originally handled appointments to workshops and approval of schedules and Terms of Reference through the SEDAR Committee, as described in the draft policy (**Attachment 3**). Recently, such issues were brought before FMP committees. Considering such business consumed considerable time in December 2009, leading to a suggestion that such actions would be better addressed through the SEDAR Committee. Returning to the original approach, as described in the draft policy, offers several benefits:

SEDAR committee may provide greater efficiency and focus to the appointment and approval process. Other FMP committees are often consumed with critical management related actions.

Using the SEDAR committee will help increase consistency across species, as the same body will be approving scheduled and TORs for all assessment projects.

The SEDAR committee is most aware of the overall SEDAR process, and feeds back to the Steering Committee, so there are less steps to follow if issues arise with TORs or how appointments are made.

#### ACTION

Review and adopt the draft SEDAR Administrative Approval Process  
Recommended modifying Council SOPPS as necessary to reflect this process

#### 5. **Conflict of Interest Policies**

Proposed revisions to National Standard 2 adopted the standards of the OMB peer review bulletin (**Attachment 4**) for peer reviews under the MSA. The intent is to develop general standards and guidance while preserving the flexibility to continue existing programs (such as SEDAR). SEDAR will be reviewed and the Secretary may determine that it meets the necessary standards. Results of Secretarial review of existing programs will be published in the Federal Register, although it is not known when this will occur. It is explicitly stated that a peer review process is not a substitute for the SSC and cannot fulfill duties allocated to the SSC.

There are two components of the OMB standards that may require attention through the Steering Committee:

Independence. Peer reviewers must be independent of the information under review, particularly in regard to the development of the science. A greater degree of independence may be required for some peer reviews, while there is also recognition in the importance of balancing the expertise with regional experience.

SEDAR has grappled with the conflicting objectives of independence and maintaining local knowledge or regional experience. We do not know at this time if the SEDAR policies regarding independence, and the provision to allow the Councils to appoint a reviewer with regional experiences in particular, will be acceptable under the new guidelines.

Conflicts of interest. The peer reviewers must not have real or perceived conflicts of interest that significantly impair objectivity of the peer review. Potential reviewers must be screened for conflict of interest in accordance with NOAA Policy on conflicts of interest for peer review subject to OMB's peer review guidelines.

Preventing conflict of interest goes hand in hand with preserving independence. There are currently no SEDAR standards for conflict of interest, but it is possible that COI screening may be necessary for all reviewers in the future. This can be handled through CIE for reviewers so appointed, but may fall to the Council for the Council appointed reviewers. It may also add a need to further distinguish between the SSC members attending as observers and the actual review panel. There is also the possibility that these criteria could impact the degree to which observers are allowed to interact directly with the review panel during the review workshop. NOAA COI evaluation forms are available for consideration (**Attachment 5**)

#### ACTION

Consider COI screening of potential Council appointed reviewers to SEDAR review workshops. This could include completion of the NOAA Conflict of Interest form.

6. **SEDAR APPROVALS**

SEDAR 23. Goliath Grouper

An assessment of Goliath Grouper will be developed by the FL FWC in accordance with SEDAR practices. Following an approach successfully applied in the past, FL will conduct data and assessment workshops and SEDAR will administer the review workshop. The Councils are offered the opportunity to appoint SSC members and Council representatives to the Data and Assessment Workshops if they desire (**Attachment 6**). They may also appoint a reviewer to the Review Workshop Panel. Councils are also asked to endorse the project schedule (**Attachment 7**) and approve the Terms of Reference (**Attachment 8**).

Concerns were raised, during solicitation of participants, over a perceived lack of attendance at workshops by appointees, especially constituent representatives. Staff compared appointees and their subsequent participation in workshops to evaluate the magnitude of this concern. As Table 1 shows below, this is a valid some concerns as some appointees have failed to attend several workshops.

Table 1. Participation at SEDAR 15-19 workshops by appointed constituent representatives. X's denote absence by an appointed participant, checks denote attendance, and NA means the individual was not appointed for that workshop.

Project	Appointee	DW	AW	RW
SEDAR 15	Mark Marhefka	X	X	X
	Bill Kelly	X	X	X
	Judy Helmey	X	X	NA
SEDAR 16	Ben Hartig	✓	X	✓
	Dick Brame	✓	NA	NA
	Bill Wickers	✓	NA	NA
SEDAR 17	Ben Hartig	✓	✓	✓
	Dick Brame	X	X	X
	Mark Marhefka	X	NA	NA
SEDAR 19	Mark Marhefka	X	X	X
	Don DeMaria	✓	X	X
	Richard Stiglitz	✓	NA	NA
	Bill Kelly	X	X	X
	John Adair	X	NA	NA

SAFMC staff contacted members of the Snapper-Grouper Advisory panel to determine interest and availability to participate in SEDAR 23. Don DeMaria and Gregg Debrango indicated that they are willing.

SEDAR 24. South Atlantic Red Snapper and 2010 South Atlantic Updates

The SEDAR Steering Committee, during a meeting held via conference call on February 8, 2010, agreed to elevate the red snapper update planned for 2010 to a benchmark assessment.

The Committee also agreed to delay the planned snowy grouper assessment update to accommodate completion of the red snapper benchmark for the December 2010 Council meeting. The black sea bass update will continue as planned and will be available for the Council by March 2011.

The Committee is asked to approve a schedule and Terms of Reference, and appoint participants for red snapper as a benchmark, which necessitates reconsidering December 2009 actions on these items. Given the late timing of this decision, a document providing drafts for the schedule and Terms of Reference and a suggested participant list will be provided as **Attachment 9** in a separate distribution.

#### ACTION

Endorse schedule, approve TORs, and appoint participants

#### 7. **Next Steering Committee Meeting**

The SEDAR Steering Committee will next meet in May 2010 prior to the CCC meeting. This Committee is asked to provide guidance to the SAFMC representatives to the Steering Committee. Likely topics of discussion include future assessment priorities, progress on procedural changes implemented late last year, discussion of Council member travel and stipend reimbursements for attendance at SEDAR workshops, and any further procedural changes necessary to comply with the reauthorized MSA.

#### *South Atlantic Assessment Priorities*

The Committee should consider the work plan reviewed by the Steering Committee in February (**Attachment 2**) when discussing future South Atlantic priorities.

Potential priority stocks for future assessment were identified based on total landings (Table 2). The top 20 stocks, based on total landings for all sectors (MRFSS, Headboat Survey, and ALS) account for 94% of the total landings from 1985-2007. Assessments are available for 12 of this top 20. A review of MARMAP data indicates that CPUE time series are available for 2 of the remaining 7 stocks, gray triggerfish and white grunt, and some observations are available for blueline tilefish. The Committee may wish to consider these stocks as future assessment priorities. One of the stocks scheduled for assessment in 2013, scamp, ranks as number 23 in landings, with total 1985-2007 landings of 1.2 million pounds.

The top species in the landings list is sheepshead, which at first glance would be an obvious assessment priority. However, further examination reveals that this stock is primarily landed in the recreational fishery and those landings are primarily taken in state waters, either inland areas or ocean waters inside of 3 miles (Figure 1). The same situation occurs for the seventh species in the ranking, crevalle jack, and the eighth, gray snapper. For these two it should be noted that commercial landings accounted for around 50% of the total landings during the mid-80's and early 1990's, with recreational removals dominating more recently. The scant landings in federal waters suggest these species could be viable candidates for transferral of management to the states or the ASMFC.

In another development, the SEFSC Recruitment, Training and Recruitment Program (RTR) at VA Tech is considering developing assessment of some of the un-assessed stocks managed by the SAFMC. The assessments would be the topic of the RTR's annual population

dynamics recruiting program, a summer session held for undergraduate students from around the country who are interested in fisheries population dynamics. Working with Erik Williams of SEFSC, Marcel Reichert of SC DNR and MARMAP, and Council staff, RTR Leader Dr. Jim Berkson has identified 4 stocks for consideration in the summer program: gray triggerfish, tomtate, scup, and bank sea bass.

### SEDAR Budget

The Steering Committee will continue to discuss the SEDAR Budget, including ways to accommodate increased activities with level funding. One issue that will be raised is the role of SEDAR in providing travel expenses and stipends for Council Members who attend SEDAR workshops. Transferring responsibility for these expenses to the Councils is an alternative for consideration.

### ACTION

Provide guidance to Steering Committee Representatives

## 8. Other Business

## 9. Timing and Tasks Motion

Table 2. The top-20 species of the snapper-grouper management unit, in order of total 1985-2007 landings. "0" denotes unassessed stocks in the assessed column.

ASSESSED	SPECIES	Total Landings in Pounds, 1985-2007	MARMAP CPUE
0	Sheepshead	43,524,896	N
1	yellowtail snapper	42,356,794	Y
1	GREATER AMBERJACK	40,208,909	Y
1	black sea bass	37,487,243	Y
1	vermilion snapper	34,550,581	Y
1	Gag Grouper	29,125,249	?
0	CREVALLE	25,705,907	N
0	gray snapper	18,345,247	N
0	BLUE RUNNER	16,116,737	N
1	TILEFISH	14,800,845	Y
1	Red Grouper	12,605,740	Y
1	mutton snapper	12,504,238	N
1	red snapper	11,317,638	N
1	Red Pogy	10,796,187	Y
0	White Grunt	9,408,042	Y
1	SNOWY GROUPE	9,185,352	Y
1	Black Grouper	7,095,423	N
0	blueline tilefish	4,056,225	?
0	lane snapper	2,923,967	N
0	gray triggerfish	2,820,104	Y
12	TOTALS	384,935,325	10-12

Figure 1. Percentage of MRFSS landings taken in inland and near-shore waters for 3 species.

