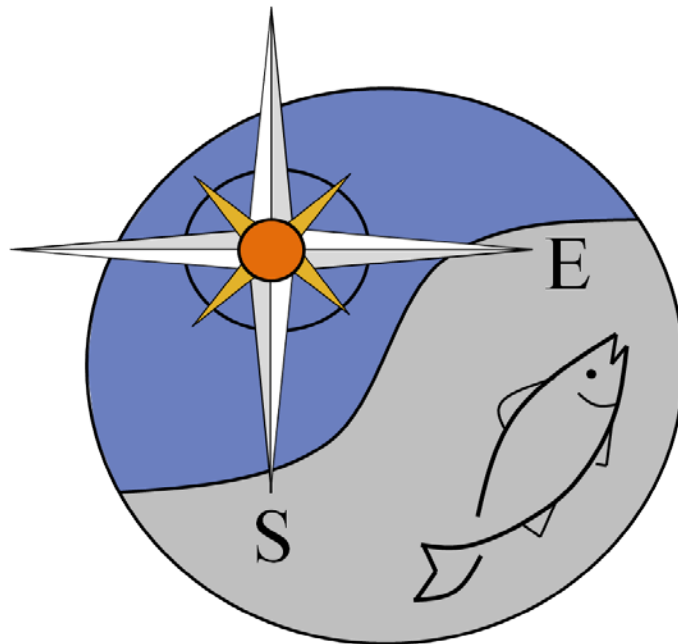


SEDAR



SEDAR Steering Committee

Meeting Summary

September 28-29, 2015

Crowne Plaza

North Charleston, SC

Version: DRAFT

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Report Content Note:

To provide context for recommendations and maintain the full record, this document combines the briefing summary provided to the Committee for consideration during the meeting as well as summary Committee discussion points and recommendations.

Outcomes from the meeting are found under the section headers “Meeting Outcomes”.

Attendance

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bonnie Ponwith, SEFSC, Chair
Kevin Anson, GMFMC*
Karyl Brewster-Geisz, NMFS HMS
Patrick Campfield, ASMFC
Roy Crabtree, NMFS SERO
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC
Carlos Farchette, CFMC
Doug Gregory, GMFMC
Ben Hartig, SAFMC
Bob Mahood, SAFMC
Miguel Rolon, CFMC*

SEDAR STAFF

Julia Byrd
John Carmichael
Julie Neer

OBSERVERS

Joey Ballenger, SC DNR*
Wally Bublely, SC DNR *
Lora Clarke, Pew Trusts
Guy Davenport, SEFSC*
Michael Drexler, Ocean Conservancy*
Steve Durkee, NMFS HMS
Russell Hudson, Directed Sustainable Fisheries*
Linda Lombardi, SEFSC*
Rick Methot, NMFS
Stacey Miller, NMFS
Marcel Reichert, SC DNR*
Ryan Rindone, GMFMC
Kyle Shertzer, SEFSC*
Katie Siegfried, SEFSC*
Tracey Smart, SC DNR*
Gregg Waugh, SAFMC
Erik Williams, NOAA Fisheries*

* Webinar Participants

1. Introduction

1.1. Documents

Agenda

Attachment 1. October 2014 Meeting Summary

1.2. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

Approve October 2014 Meeting Summary

2. SEDAR Project Updates

2.1. Documents

Attachment 2. Projects Report, October 2015

Attachment 3. SEDAR Projects List

2.2. Summary

Attachment 3 provides a summary of current and recently completed SEDAR assessment projects.

2.3. ACTION

- Project guidance as required.

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Approved agenda and meeting summary.
- SEDAR 47 Review Workshop Chair (Goliath Grouper)
 - Both the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils appointed candidates to chair the SEDAR 47 Review Workshop. The Steering Committee recommended that Marcel Reichert of SC DNR, appointed by the SAFMC, serve as chair. Both Gulf appointees will serve as reviewers, thereby giving each Council 2 representatives on the Review Panel.
 - The Committee directed that review panels for future stock assessments involving multiple cooperators be composed of equal cooperator appointees. For the typical project involving 2 cooperators, one will appoint a chair and reviewer and one will appoint 2 reviewers. Ideally, the cooperator responsible for providing a chair will be identified in the planning process to avoid confusion.

3. Data Best Practices Workshop

3.1. Documents

Attachment 4. SEDAR Data Best Practices Workshop Report

3.2. Overview

The SEDAR Data Best Practices workshop was held June 22-26, 2015 in Atlanta, GA. The primary goal of this workshop was to identify common decisions made in SEDAR Data Workshops and to develop recommended best practices to help support and streamline such decisions in future assessments. The workshop focused on data compilation and analysis, and procedural issues that may help or hinder that work.

The organization and advance preparation required for this workshop was considerable. Prior to the workshop a series of focus group webinars were held to develop an inventory of SEDAR Data Workshop common or recurring data, analysis, and process issues. Not all issues identified in the inventory could be tackled during this workshop process, so issues in the inventory were prioritized to address key process issues and as many straight forward technical issues as possible.

In order to address the diverse issues that arise at DW's, a large number of people participated in this workshop. To effectively manage the workshop and make it run efficiently, there were two hierarchical levels of participation. Workshop participants were assigned to a Best Practice Panel (BPP) and/or one of five Topical Technical Groups (TTG; life history, commercial, recreational, indices, and catch at size/age).

The workshop was divided into a series of Technical Group breakout sessions and plenary sessions. During the breakout sessions, TTG members discussed the identified data issues and potential solutions and developed preliminary best practice recommendations. The BPP participated in all plenary sessions while the TTG's only participated in the plenary sessions where issues relevant to their group were discussed. In the plenary sessions, TTG members presented a brief overview of the data issue, potential solutions, and preliminary best practice recommendations. The BPP and TTG(s) had further discussion on the issue, as necessary, and together developed the final best practice recommendations.

During the workshop, participants developed best practice recommendations for a variety of technical and process issues; identified a potential process to address future revision and evaluation of workshop recommendations and best practices; and made general recommendations to help improve the SEDAR process. These topics are fully documented within the final workshop report, but some of the key next steps are highlighted below.

- Implement best practice recommendations. Workshop participants recommended that the best practices identified take effect immediately, while also acknowledging that incorporating best practice recommendations

will be a rolling process and it may take time to fully implement all of the recommendations. The timing of implementation may vary by Cooperator and/or Technical Group and may be, in part, dependent on the upcoming SEDAR schedule.

- Incorporate process tools developed during the workshop (e.g. SEDAR Data Timeline, DW Roles & Responsibilities tables, etc.) into the SEDAR planning process and project implementation.
- Consider creating a SEDAR Data Best Practice Methods Group to address future revision and evaluation of workshop recommendations and Best Practices. The workshop panelists recommended establishing a methods group similar to the Assessment Working Group used by ICCAT that would meet annually, or as needed via webinar(s) or workshop. The panel would be chaired by SEDAR or SEFSC personnel. The standing panel would have similar representation as the Best Practice Panel during this workshop, adding other participants as needed based on the topics to be addressed.
- Consider creating a SEDAR Project Management position to help effectively track SEDAR assessment projects. The workshop panelists noted that the data compilation and analyses for SEDAR assessments are very complex and many of the data inputs/outputs are interconnected. The ideal candidate for this position would have project management experience and would preferably be based and managed within the SEFSC. Development and use of a project management software package was also suggested as a useful tool to help manage projects and track critical dependencies and data bottlenecks over time.
- Plan/coordinate workshops proposed by SEDAR Data Best Practice panelists. Some of the issues discussed at the Data Best Practices workshop were complex and could not be resolved during this workshop process. Technical groups proposed a number of workshops to help resolve these issues. A comprehensive list of the proposed workshops prioritized by participants is included in the workshop report. The Stock Boundary workshop was identified by the group as the highest priority.
- Develop SEDAR Best Practice section on website. Currently, all of the Data Best Practice information is housed on the Procedural Workshop 7: Data Best Practices webpage. The workshop participants noted that SEDAR best practices recommendations need to be easily accessible on the SEDAR website. SEDAR staff will explore developing a SEDAR Best Practice section of the website.
- Consider development of a management and regulatory history database. Workshop participants developed new SEDAR management templates during the workshop which will be used in future assessments. However, panelists also noted that it would be helpful to develop an overall database that contains regulatory information for all species. A panel member noted there have already been some discussions about this within NMFS.

3.3. ACTION

Review recommendations and next steps, and provide guidance on implementation.

- Best Practice's Group: Data
- SEFSC SEDAR Project Manager
- Next Level Workshops
 - Meristics and Stock Boundaries
 - Discard Mortality
 - Estimating Commercial Directed Discards
 - Indices Construction
 - Assess Reproductive Inputs Effect on Fishery Management Reference Points
 - Reconvene SE US Histological Workshops
 - Maturity Estimation Methods
 - Uncertainty in Commercial Landings
- Develop Best Practices section for website
- Management and regulatory history database

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Create a standing Data Best Practices Panel
 - Members include those who served on the Panel for the Best Practices Workshop with the addition of Donna Bellais of the GSMFC.
 - Cooperators are asked to review their representatives and provide any changes to SEDAR staff.
 - The group will meet at least once per year, via webinar or in-person.
 - The Chair will be chosen by the members.
 - The first task of the panel is to develop TORs that specify its purpose and approach.
- Convene a Stock ID and Meristics workshop in 2016 as recommended.
 - A subset of the Data Best Practices Panel will serve as an organizing committee, and is approved to add additional expertise as necessary.
- The Committee discussed whether the next procedures workshop should address discard mortality or the effect of reproductive inputs on

reference points. Priority should be given to the topic with the greatest impact on assessment uncertainty.

- Dr. Ponwith will consult with SEFSC assessment teams for feedback on the influence of these topics on assessment uncertainty.
- The newly created Data Best Practices Panel will be asked for guidance on which topic is the highest priority and most appropriate for SEDAR consideration.
- An Assessment Best Practices workshop is under consideration, and could address the reference points issue as a focus topic.

4. SEFSC Data and Assessment Program Reviews

4.1. Documents

Attachment 5. SEFSC Program Review Document

4.2. Summary

Southeast Fisheries Science Center Data and Assessment Programs were reviewed in 2013 and 2014. Center Director Dr. Bonnie Ponwith will update the Committee on steps the SEFSC is taking to address comments and suggestions. The documents package includes the reviewer reports and SEFSC response for the data (2013) and assessment (2014) programs.

5. NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Prioritization

5.1. Documents

Attachment 6. Prioritization Plan

5.2. Summary

Dr. Rick Methot of NOAA Fisheries will present the Stock Assessment Prioritization plan to the Committee.

5.3. Action

- Discuss application to SEDAR priorities

MEETING OUTCOME:

- The Committee requested that the SEDAR Committees of the Council Cooperators (Gulf, South Atlantic and Caribbean) receive presentations of the prioritization process at their SSC and Council level. Cooperators are asked to consider how the prioritization process can be applied, including the roles of the SSCs, APs and the Council. They should also consider details such as which group should be responsible for scoring stocks and

developing weighting factors for scoring criteria. Cooperators are asked to report back to the Steering Committee at the next meeting.

- Dr. Ponwith will coordinate with Stacey Miller of NOAA Fisheries S&T to obtain quantitative values for scoring prioritization criteria.

6. SEDAR SOPPS and Process Review

6.1. Documents

Attachment 7. SEDAR SOPPS

6.2. Summary

The Committee reviewed the SEDAR SOPPS in detail at the last meeting and directed that the revised version be considered for final approval at the next meeting.

6.3. Action

- Approve SOPPs incorporating changes from prior meeting

MEETING OUTCOME:

- The Committee approved the SOPPS with no further changes.
- Dr. Ponwith presented a proposed 'Research Cycle' process for developing benchmark stock assessments.
 - A key difference between this and the existing approach is that benchmark assessments would not be used to provide management advice. The model developed through the research cycle would be updated with the most recent information through an "operational assessment" process, similar to existing Standard and Update approaches, to generate timely advice.
 - Questions and concerns raised by the Committee include:
 - Amount of time required for the research cycle, and provisions to ensure the project does conclude within a reasonable amount of time.
 - The impact of this approach on overall assessment productivity, and whether research cycle and operational assessments can occur simultaneously.
 - Potential benefits to Cooperators, such as reduced time lags between terminal assessment years and management actions.

- Transitioning to this approach for existing assessments, particularly guidance on the changes that would trigger a new benchmark and research cycle effort.
- Further review is required by the Cooperators and their technical bodies. SEFSC analysts who derived this approach will attend SSC and other technical advisor panel meetings at the next available opportunity to present the proposed changes and discuss SSC concerns and questions. In addition to the general overview of the process provided at this meeting, the Center representatives will present the SSCs an example timeline for conducting a benchmark through the proposed research cycle, These reviews should be concluded by April 2016.

7. Stock Assessment Resource Availability

7.1. Documents

None

7.2. Summary

During discussion of assessment project scheduling at the October 2014 meeting, the Committee requested that, at the next meeting, Center Director, Dr. Ponwith, provide information on the assessment resources available to meet the assessment needs of each Cooperator. It was further requested that a more precise measurement of capabilities and workload be used for this report than the assessment “slot” metric used by this committee in the past.

8. Assessment Project Schedule

8.1. Documents

Attachment 8. 2016 Project Schedule

8.2. Summary

The committee is asked to finalize 2017 projects and identify future priorities.

SEDAR Stock Boundaries / Meristics Procedural Workshop Proposal

At the SEDAR Data Best Practice workshop, panelists developed best practices for a number of technical and process issues, including development of a process timeline for the data portion of SEDAR Benchmark assessments. Two data decisions were identified by panelists as critical to being made early within the SEDAR process: 1) the stock boundary decision and 2) the development of meristic conversion equations. The stock boundary decision provides the basis for how all data are identified and allocated to a particular spatial area within a specific stock. Stock boundaries or ID affect how all of the

data are compiled and analyzed for all SEDAR Data Workshop (DW) Working Groups. Meristic conversions are needed early in the process as various DW Working Groups need this information to begin analyses in preparation for the DW. If these two critical decisions are made late in the process, they can potentially cause substantial delays in data compilation.

To address these issues, the SEDAR Data Best Practice panelists recommended having a Stock Boundary and Meristics Workshop approximately 2-3 years in advance of SEDAR Data Workshops. This workshop would review current stock boundaries and meristic equations used for species under Fishery Management Plans (FMP) and provide recommendations for both stock boundaries and meristic equations by species. The workshop could be specific to species that have recently been assessed, those on the current SEDAR schedule, or broader to encompass all species under a specific FMP.

The species specific stock boundary and meristic conversions recommended from this workshop would then be reviewed via a 'Stock Boundaries/Meristic Review' webinar for each SEDAR benchmark project approximately 22 weeks before the Data Workshop. The review would be done by Data Workshop Panelists appointed to that SEDAR project, making sure to include representatives from the Life History, Commercial, and Recreational Working Groups. This Review would determine if the recommendations can be used for the assessment 'as is' or if any changes or additional analyses need to be considered. If changes or additional analyses are needed, these items would be incorporated into the DW Terms of Reference.

SEDAR is proposing to broaden the 'Gray and Lane Snapper Stock ID' procedural workshop currently on the 2016 schedule, to a 'Stock Boundary and Meristics' procedural workshop to better match the recommendations coming out of the SEDAR Data Best Practice Workshop.

8.3. Action

- Review 2016 Workload
- Finalize 2017 Projects
- Identify 2018-2019 Priorities
- Consider Stock Boundary & Meristics Procedural Workshop for 2016

MEETING OUTCOME:

- The Committee discussed Cooperator assessment priorities for 2018 and beyond. Table 2 shows the Cooperator requests and approximate timing of specific assessments. This information remains preliminary, as the Committee was unable to finalize project plans for 2017 or 2018.
- Addressing revised MRIP estimates is the major uncertainty hindering 2017 and 2018 assessment planning. Changes in the effort survey are expected to significantly affect past recreational catch estimates. A

Transition Team convened by NMFS developed recommendations for addressing the new survey values.

- Updated catch estimates are anticipated to be available for use in stock assessments sometime between July and October of 2017. One approach proposed, and mentioned in the transition report, is to conduct “catch only” updates of existing assessments through the assessment terminal year as soon as updated catch estimates are available. A concern with this approach is that it will consume considerable, but as yet unknown, resources without updating any assessments to include new data (age or length compositions, indices of abundance, etc.) and observations since the terminal year.
- The Committee identified the proposed schedule shown in Table 2, but did not commit to the proposal as final. SEFSC staff will review the proposals and report to the Committee at a meeting via webinar to be held on October 30, 2015.
- Approved schedule changes include:
 - The SEDAR 50 Review of ASMFC spot and croaker is removed.
 - The HMS Gulf blacktip shark update will be scheduled to allow including the revised MRIP estimates expected in late 2017.
 - The vermilion snapper and greater amberjack updates for the South Atlantic in 2017 will be scheduled to allow including the revised MRIP estimates.
 - The South Atlantic blueline tilefish assessment may change from an update to a standard following SSC consideration in late October.
- “MRIP” entries for the Gulf Team in 2018 indicate updates using revised MRIP estimates. The Gulf Council will provide a priority list of stocks to update by January 1, 2016.
- The benchmark assessment of Scamp and Gray Snapper is a possible first candidate for the revised “research cycle” benchmark assessment development process described previously.

9. Other Business

10. Next Meetings

Based on past practices, the next meeting will be via webinar in late Spring 2016.

11. Adjourn

Table 1. Assessment Project Schedule and Details Overview.

| Plan Year | SEDAR # | Stocks | Type | Terminal Data | SEDAR Concluded (dissemination) |
|--------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 2014 | 41 | SA Red snapper and gray triggerfish | Benchmark | 2013 | April 2016 |
| | 42 | Gulf red grouper | Benchmark | 2013 | September 2015 |
| | 43 | Gulf gray triggerfish | Standard | 2013 | August 2015 |
| 2015 | 44 | ASMFC Red Drum | Review (B) | 2014 | October 2015 |
| | 45 | Gulf Vermilion Snapper | Standard | 2014 | March 2016 |
| | 46 | Caribbean data limited | Benchmark | 2013 | April 2016 |
| | 47 | FL Goliath Grouper | Review (B) | 2014 | June 2016 |
| | 48 | FL Black Grouper | Review (B) | 2014 | December 2016 |
| | U | SA Golden Tilefish | Update | 2014 | April 2016 |
| 2016 | 49 | Gulf Data Limited | Benchmark | 2014 | December 2016 |
| | 50 | ASMFC Spot/Croaker | Review (B) | | Oct 2016 |
| | U | SA Red grouper | Update | 2015 | January 2017 |
| | U | HMS Dusky Shark | Update | 2014 | Jan 2017 |
| | U | Gulf Gag | Update | 2015 | January 2017 |
| | U | Gulf Greater Amberjack | Update | 2015 | February 2017 |
| | U | SA Blueline Tilefish | Update | 2015 | January 2017 |
| 2017 | PW | Stock ID/Meristics | Proc Wkshp | NA | Jan 2017 |
| | B | SA Scamp & Gray Snapper | Benchmark | TBD | TBD |
| | U | Gulf Blacktip Shark | Update | 2016 | TBD |
| | U | SA Vermilion | Update | TBD | TBD |
| | U | SA Greater Amberjack | Update | TBD | TBD |
| | S/B | Yellowtail Snapper | S or B | 2016 | Aug 2018 |
| 2018 | PW | Best Practices: Assessment | Proc Wkshp | NA | TBD |
| | B | Atlantic Blacktip Shark | Benchmark | 2017 | TBD |
| Future Priorities | | | | | |
| | | Gulf Red Snapper | S | | |
| | | Yellowtail Snapper | TBD – S or B | TBD | TBD |
| | | Gulf yellowedge grouper | Standard | 2015 | |
| | | Gulf & Atlantic gray snapper | Benchmark | 2015 | |
| | | SA red porgy | TBD S/B | 2016 | 2018 |
| | | | | | |

Table 2. Assessment Workload Planning Worksheet, 2016-2018. MODIFIED AT MEETING

| YEAR | Quarter | SEFSC – South Atlantic | | | | | SEFSC - Gulf | | | | | SEFSC- Caribbean | SEFSC -HMS | | FL FWC | | OTHER Projs |
|------|---------|------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|----|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|------|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | |
| 2016 | 1 | 41 | 41 | | | gT | 49 | 49 | | | | 46 | | | 47 | 48 | |
| | 2 | 41 | 41 | | | | 49 | 49 | | | | 46 | | | 47 | 48 | |
| | 3 | | | BL | RG | | 49 | 49 | | GG | GAJ | | DS | | 47 | 48 | Stock ID |
| | 4 | | | BL | RG | | 49 | 49 | | GG | GAJ | | DS | | | 48 | Stock ID |
| 2017 | 1 | SGS | SGS | | | | 49 | 49 | SGS | SGS | | | | | | 48 | |
| | 2 | SGS | SGS | | | | | | SGS | SGS | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | SGS | SGS | | | | | | SGS | SGS | | | | | | | BPA |
| | 4 | SGS | SGS | VS | GAJ | | <i>RS</i> | <i>RS</i> | SGS | SGS | | | GBt | | YTS | | BPA |
| 2018 | 1 | SGS | SGS | VS | GAJ | | <i>RS</i> | <i>RS</i> | SGS | SGS | | | GBt | | YTS | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | ABt | SBS | YTS | | |
| | 3 | <i>BSB</i> | <i>RP</i> | <i>SnG</i> | <i>RS</i> | | MRIP | MRIP | MRIP | MRIP | MRIP | | ABt | SBS | YTS | | |
| | 4 | <i>BSB</i> | <i>RP</i> | <i>SnG</i> | <i>RS</i> | | MRIP | MRIP | MRIP | MRIP | MRIP | | ABt | SBS | YTS | | |

INCLUDING CHANGES APPROVED OR RECOMMENDED DURING THIS MEETING

BENCHMARK Benchmarks are in Bold. Project number listed where know, otherwise species listed

Standard Standard Projects in Italics

Update Update Projects in plain font

Codes

| | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| gT | golden Tilefish | BL | Blueline Tilefish | RS | Red Snapper |
| SGS | Scamp/Gray Snapper benchmark | RG | Red Grouper | GG | Gag Grouper |
| DS | HMS Dusky Shark | VS | Vermilion Snapper | SBS | Sandbar shark |
| GBt | Gulf Blacktip Shark | GAJ | Greater Amberjack | YTS | Yellowtail Snapper |
| Abt | Atlantic Blacktip Shark | BSB | Black Sea Bass | RP | Red Porgy |
| SnG | Snowy Grouper | BPA | Best Practices, Assessments | | |