

SEDAR

SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Caribbean Fishery Management Council
NOAA Fisheries
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

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SEDAR Steering Committee

Meeting Summary Minutes

October 2-3, 2007

St. Petersburg, FL

Attendance: MEMBERS: Alex Chester, SEFSC; Roy Crabtree, SERO; Bob Mahood & George Geiger, SAFMC; Wayne Swingle & Robin Riechers, GMFMC; Miguel Rolon & Eugenio Pineiro, CFMC; Larry Simpson, GSMFC; Vince O'Shea, ASMFC. STAFF: John Carmichael, SAFMC; Tina Trezza, GMFMC.

1. Introduction
2. Agenda Review

The agenda was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes: February 2007 meeting

Motion made by Geiger, second by Riechers, to approve minutes of the February 2007 meeting was approved.

4. Update on Recent Activities and Schedule Review

- a. Activities Completed since last meeting

SEDAR 13: Small coastal sharks

SEDAR 14: Caribbean mutton snapper, queen conch, and yellowfin grouper

The Committee supported applying creative assessment techniques to Caribbean stocks. Alternative such as visual surveys and methods that involve fishermen directly should be considered. Traditional catch data driven methods may never be adequate for many of the Caribbean resources.

The Committee endorsed SEDAR support of data evaluation and creative assessment approach workshops involving CFMC SSC and APs, SEFSC, and knowledgeable Caribbean researchers. Such workshops should be designed to include a wide variety of constituents and scientist to develop realistic assessment approaches and data expectations.

The Committee recommended convening data and assessment evaluation workshops during 2009 and 2010 so that meaningful stock status evaluations can be pursued in the next SEDAR Caribbean slot in 2010.

SEDAR Supplement 1: Grouper Assessment Review

The Committee stated its support and approval for the supplemental assessment review process. The Committee expressed support for reasonable and appropriate continuity over time and across species and areas, especially with regard to shared uncertainties.

b. Current Activities

SEDAR 17: South Atlantic Spanish mackerel and vermilion snapper

The Committee consented to a change in the SEDAR 17 species and schedule. Vermilion snapper will be assessed rather than white grunt, and the project shall be complete and presented to the SAFMC SSC in December 2008.

The Committee recognizes that all involved in this assessment will be under a heavy workload to meet the desired completion date. Of primary concern is progress on evaluating age structures collected over the last few years. SEFSC personnel will work the SC DNR MARMAP personnel to ensure all structures are prepped and evaluated in time for a mid-May data workshop. Progress updates will be provided by SEFSC representatives at each Council meeting until the data workshop (December and March 2008).

The Committee briefly discussed the effects of unforeseen circumstance and worst-case scenarios. The ultimate effect would be that some samples may not be read, which might affect the terminal year available for age composition information. In severe circumstances, the schedule may be delayed with the project completed later than December 2008.

SEDAR 18: South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico red drum

Lead assessment agencies: South Atlantic - ASMFC TC/States. Gulf of Mexico: to be determined.

SEFSC will fill the lead analytical role for Gulf red drum. The ASFMC Technical Committee will serve as the lead for South Atlantic red drum.

SERO reported progress on ceding red drum management to the States.

The Gulf States Council (GMFMC) formed an ad hoc scientific committee to evaluate available red drum data and identify critical studies that could be completed for the assessment. The Committee was charged with developing a long-term program to collect age-structured information through cooperative sampling. Subsequently, the Committee recommended the Council request the SEFSC be requested to evaluate the risks of allowing harvest to collect data and how many fish would be needed.

c. Future Activities

SEDAR 19. The Committee will request that FL provide a lead analytical team for hogfish. South Atlantic white grunt will also be assessed.

The Committee agreed to review ASMFC menhaden and croaker in a unique review workshop, separate from that for SEDAR 19. Specific timing will be determined in cooperation with ASMFC.

The Committee supported encouraging FL to conduct an assessment of black grouper by 2010.

The Committee agreed that definitive future scheduling is difficult at this point due to the need to meet ACL obligations by 2010/2011. Long-term scheduling will be pursued in greater detail once current critical needs are addressed.

SEDAR 22: Stocks to be assessed will be determined following data and assessment evaluation workshops.

Goliath grouper. SEFSC and FWRI staff are working cooperatively to develop a data collection and evaluation plan which is intended to include recommended safe take levels for research. This plan will be provided to the Committee once complete.

The Committee approved the SEDAR schedule as modified above.

5. Status of new positions.

The Committee was provided a summary of recent staffing changes, including the hiring of 2 SEDAR Coordinators.

6. Federal/OMB Peer Review Requirements

The Committee was briefed on SEDARs role in fulfilling federal peer review requirements.

7. Research Needs Prioritization Progress Update

Councils continue to work with their SSC's on these items.

The Committee discussed possible accountability measures that could be considered under the reauthorized M-S Act, such as recruitment surveys that would allow early detection of important trends, and the need for robust fishery independent surveys for use in more rapidly evaluating fishery and stock trends.

8. Review of SEDAR Guidelines Modifications

The Committee approved the guideline edits, and suggested further modification of the language addressing the SSC role in SEDAR once reauthorized M-S Act guidelines become available.

The role of the SSC within SEDAR was discussed in detail. It was agreed that SEDAR was intentionally developed with an expectation of strong SSC involvement in all phases. SSC members have many important and dedicated roles to fill within SEDAR

workshops. SSC members are expected to be involved in every step of SEDAR, and should view their role as critical to ensuring appropriate data and models are used and that issues of interest to their SSC are addressed.

The SSC is intended to have a role that complements the efforts of SEDAR, and is expected to provide an important check to the process. However, it is not intended that Council SSC's should strive to repeat a review of a scope similar to that undertaken by the SEDAR review panel. In other words, SSC's should not feel obligated to 'review the review'.

The Committee agreed that the intent behind SEDAR is to provide best available science for consideration by the Councils and SSC's. Achieving this, however, does not imply that there will be no further uncertainty. The Steering Committee agreed that a key role of the SSC in reviewing the SEDAR assessment is to address uncertainties and to develop advice for the Council in the face of stated and recognized uncertainties. Council SSC's also fill a critical role in developing fishing level recommendations based on the assessments.

9. SAFE/Trends Reports

The Committee recognizes the need for regular status and fishery updates such as SAFE reports. A primary concern is determining the information content and identifying parties responsible for actual report development. Future safe reports should fulfill requirements of ACLs and Accountability Measures.

Data delays were discussed. SAFE reports must include timely data to be of any use in adjusting management requirements. Timing of reports must also reflect fishing years.

Councils were advised to work through their SSC's in determining a process for SAFE reports development and identifying appropriate information. This should be addressed in conjunction with MSA requirements for ACLs and AMs.

10. Procedural Issues

AW approach

The committee recognizes that a double assessment workshop approach has value, but expressed reservations related to the extra time and expense. A recommendation was made to consider alternatives, such as:

- increased milestones between workshops
- increased use of conference calls and email distributions
- increased follow-up and communication between analytical teams and other participants

The Committee supported procedural workshops to reduce uncertainty related to models, key assumptions, and consistent uncertainties. It is believed that improved procedures and standardization of methods were appropriate and feasible will improve long-term efficiency of individual workshops.

The Committee recommended that it be clearly stated to all analytical teams that they shall be prepared to present a functioning model at the beginning of each assessment

workshop, and that the analytical team should be encouraged to communicate with others on the assessment workshop panel via email or conference call as necessary to develop a functioning model.

SEDAR Procedural Workshops

The Committee endorsed convening SEDAR procedural workshops.

Two workshops will be held in 2008: one addressing the index preparation guide for data workshops and another addressing treatment of changing catchability for fishery CPUE.

Caribbean data evaluation workshop

The Committee approved Caribbean data evaluation workshops. The first will be held in 2008.

11. Other Business

The Committee discussed the role of SEDAR as one component of a complete management system. This implies that SEDAR assessments are developed to address management needs and therefore have different objectives and requirements than research projects. It was agreed that this does not impose any relaxation of SEDARs efforts to completely and robustly evaluate assessment components, but rather requires consistency in treatment of common uncertainties.

The next step in the SEDAR process evolution should be to identify those uncertainties and their appropriate treatments.

One area of particular concern is potential departures from 'normal' methods of handling data components that are used repeatedly.

The Committee agreed that the SEFSC, as lead assessment agency on most projects, plays a key role in ensuring consistency across assessments and areas in addressing uncertainties.

The Committee stated that decisions made at SEDAR workshops must be adequately justified in writing in the assessment reports. Participants should be constantly reminded of the need to document their recommendations in writing.

Staff was advised to develop text for this concept and edit the guidelines accordingly.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held May 5, 2008 in St. Thomas. The meeting shall be scheduled in conjunction with the Council Chair's meeting.