

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

4055 Faber Place #201
North Charleston SC 29405
Phone (843) 571-4366
Fax (843) 769-4520

SEDAR Steering Committee

October 2-3, 2007

St. Petersburg, FL

Overview

1. Introduction
2. Agenda Review

Supporting Documentation:

Attachment 1: February 2007 Steering Committee Minutes
Attachment 2: SEDAR Planning Schedule
Attachment 3: Overview of status determinations
Attachment 4 "Final Information Quality for Peer Review Bulletin"
Attachment 5: NMFS Assessment Summary Form
Attachment 6: SEDAR Guidelines
Attachment 7: Example SAFE Report

3. Approval of Minutes: February 2007 meeting
(Attachment 1: February 2007 Minutes)
4. Update on Recent Activities and Schedule Review
 - a. Activities Completed since last meeting

SEDAR 13: Small coastal sharks

Completed. The RW panel accepted the species-specific assessments for the four species (blacknose, Atl. sharpnose, finetooth, and bonnethead), and commented that the assessment based on the full SCS complex should not be used for management since species-specific assessments are available for all species within the complex.

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

Completed. Assessments not informative regarding benchmarks and status due to lack of basic data. May be some promise in survey indices to determine relative status, perhaps estimate abundance if adequate sampling can be obtained. Considerable concerns regarding basic data collection activities.

SEDAR Supplement 1: Grouper Assessment Review

Completed. Subsequent identification of a conversion error in MRFSS data input for gulf was resolved recently.

SEDAR Update: South Atlantic Vermilion snapper

Update completed and accepted by SAFMC SSC with reservations. Concerns raised regarding method (length). Significant otolith collection effort since 2003 benchmark. Significant reductions are indicated, compelling consideration of an accelerated 'ASAP' benchmark.

b. Current Activities

SEDAR 15: South Atlantic greater amberjack, Red Snapper

Red snapper replaced white grunt based on life history data status

FL FWCC: SA/GOM Mutton snapper benchmark

Proceeding on schedule

SEDAR 16: Atlantic and Gulf king mackerel

Proceeding on schedule. Data scoping late October/early November

SEDAR 17: South Atlantic Spanish mackerel and vermilion snapper

Stock change: vermilion snapper replaces white grunt. Desire to accelerate schedule and complete by December 2008.

- Update from SEFSC regarding plan of work to complete otolith ageing for vermilion snapper and Spanish mackerel. Require estimated date of completion to enable drafting a project schedule.

SEDAR 18: South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico red drum

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

c. Future Activities

Review SEDAR Schedule, with attention to meeting ACL requirements by 2010/2011.

Timing of future assessments may need to be altered by desire to complete SEDAR 17 by the end of 2018. Also need to balance tasks between the 2 coordinators.

(Attachment 2: SEDAR Schedule)

(Attachment 3: Overview of status determinations)

ACTION: Approve SEDAR Schedule

5. Status of new positions.

New SEDAR Coordinators:

Dr. Julie Neer, formerly with SEFSC Panama City, coordinated shark SEDARs and has Gulf familiarity.

Dale Theiling, formerly with SC DNR, coordination and administrative experience and South Atlantic familiarity.

6. Federal/OMB Peer Review Requirements

SEDAR provides an approved independent Peer Review process for the SE Region and therefore falls under various federal reporting and procedural requirements. Most of the requirements are covered by OMB's "Final Information Quality for Peer Review Bulletin" (**Attachment 4**). SEDAR projects are tracked along with all other NOAA fisheries peer review activities via an online database:

<http://www.cio.noaa.gov/itmanagement/prplans/PRsummaries.html>

NOAA fisheries has a standardized form developed as part of the Stock Assessment Improvement Program (SAIP). This 'Assessment Summary Form' (**Attachment 5**) is to be completed by NOAA Fisheries assessment scientists, and will be included in future SEDAR reports to increase efficiency and help ensure that each agency's needs are met when a SEDAR project is complete.

7. Research Needs Prioritization Progress Update

The Steering Committee directed each Council to have its SSC address research and monitoring planning items. At the February 2007 meeting the Committee agreed that SSC's should:

- 1) Develop a list of stocks that should be assessed regularly through SEDAR and for which adequate data exist to justify inclusion on the schedule at this time. (Primary stocks)
- 2) Develop a list of stocks that should be assessed in the future but lack adequate data for inclusion at this time (Secondary stocks; previously 'stocks of concern')
- 3) Develop recommendations for minimum data elements that should be collected: i) for all exploited stocks, and ii) for stocks subject to ACL's.
- 4) Develop a prioritized list of research needs.

Since this charge was made, the reauthorized Magnuson Act was finalized with a requirement that Councils provide the Secretary long term (5-year) and short term (10-year) research priorities.

Each Council is asked to report on their SSC's progress in establishing research priorities. Councils are also reminded that the Steering Committee intends to address questions 1 - 4 (above) at the Spring 2008 meeting.

8. Review of SEDAR Guidelines Modifications

ACTION: Approve edits

Updated SEDAR guidelines are provided for review and approval. Changes made to reflect recommendations from the last meeting are summarized at the start of the document. Specific changes are also highlighted throughout the report.

(**Attachment 6 - SEDAR Guidelines**)

9. SAFE/Trends Reports

ACTION: Endorse SAFE Reports, Develop process for completion

A very preliminary, very rough draft of an example SAFE report for South Atlantic red porgy will be provided. There simply has not been time to do this task justice.

(**Attachment 7: Example SAFE Report**)

10. Procedural Issues

a. Results and output file

SAFMC Motion, June 2007 to require submission of an organized and accessible electronic file (excel or compatible) containing assessment results for use by Council and others in preparing management evaluations.

This will be implemented starting with SEDAR 15. Assessment outputs will be added to the input data spreadsheet.

b. Workshop tasks memo

This change was initiated by SEFSC to improve tracking of deliverables. At the conclusion of each workshop the Chair works with the panel to develop a list of tasks to be completed following the workshop. The work plan includes a summary of the task, identifies those responsible for completing the task, and specifies a completion date. The final memo is submitted to the SEFSC leadership and the workshop panel.

c. AW approach

The FL mutton snapper assessment led by FL FWC incorporated 2 assessment workshops. Under this plan, the data and modeling approaches are discussed at the first workshop, and preferred configurations, results, and sensitivities are discussed at the second. Preliminary feedback on this approach is overwhelmingly positive and has resulted in suggestions that this model become the default for SEDAR.

SEDAR continues to struggle at the AW stage, as evidenced by the fact that basic model results are seldom available at the conclusion of the workshop. This is largely due to delays in basic data preparation and a lack of time to prepare all necessary model runs during the week-long assessment workshop. Often, final results for supporting analyses such as projections and sensitivities are not completed until the review workshop and are therefore not available for evaluation by the AW panel. The end result is that AW participants are unable to address all their assigned TORs during the workshop and have difficulty completing their workshop report. Also, they miss the opportunity to discuss model results, including status and benchmark recommendations, in any detail.

The solution to the core problem is simply to require that a functioning baseline model, basic projections as required in the AW TORs, and logical sensitivity analyses are prepared and available for distribution and discussion at the start of the assessment workshops. Achieving this requires providing basic data to the analysts by the specified deadlines, and a commitment by the analysts to adequately prepare for the workshop and keep the other AW members informed of progress and issues. Any required exchanges between the analytical team and the AW or DW panels should be addressed via email or conference calls.

The primary downside to the 2 assessment workshop framework is the additional time and expense. This could possibly be offset somewhat by reducing the time of each workshop. For example, the 2 AWs held for FL mutton were 3-day meetings. Pre-AW conference calls may offer a further compromise, especially if combined with email exchanges to address minor issues.

d. Improving SSC involvement & SSC review guidance

At past meetings the Steering Committee clarified the responsibilities of SSC members at SEDAR workshops, and these changes are just now starting to work through the system.

Securing SSC participation remains a struggle. This appears directly related to work loads. When the schedule shifts toward one council more heavily, that council has trouble filling SSC workshop slots. This was a problem last year with the Gulf Council, and is shaping up to be a problem next year with the South Atlantic.

Given this apparent negative correlation between work load and SSC participation, one solution may be to better balance the workload across regions. While this may be difficult in the short term, given the need to assess several South Atlantic Stocks to meet ACL requirements by 2010/2011, improvements should be feasible for 2012 and beyond.

Another aspect that requires clarification is the scope the SSC's review of assessments prepared through SEDAR. The SEDAR Review Workshop provides a robust, independent, and rigorous review of the assessment. The Steering Committee recently made modifications to improve rigor, including adding a Council appointee to the review panel to help ensure that local information is adequately represented and increasing SSC responsibilities at the assessment workshop. The intent in allowing further SSC review was to follow process used prior to SEDAR, in which the SSC reviewed the report of the assessment panel, decided whether to accept it or not, and proceeded with specific management recommendations.

The Steering Committee is requested to provide language clarifying the role of the SSC in reviewing SEDAR assessments.

e. SEDAR Procedural Workshops

SEDAR workshops often result in extensive procedural discussions that are important but consume valuable time. In some instances issues are identified that may affect the assessment results but are too complex to be fully explored in the time available. Examples include treatment of age-varying natural mortality, catchability changes, and creation of historical catch time series. A related issue is that participants sometimes state they could better prepare for workshops if they were better informed of expectations and provided some guidance on acceptable methods.

To resolve these issues, participants have suggested holding procedural workshops to address influential issues that transcend individual assessments. Such workshops can be organized through SEDAR, with funding for travel provided either by SEDAR or by the participants agencies.

Suggested Procedural Workshops:

- 1) Index preparation guide for SEDAR Data Workshops
- 2) Addressing changes in fishery dependent CPUE
- 3) Estimating age specific natural mortality
- 4) Allocating unclassified categories to individual species
- 5) developing long term catch datasets
- 6) benchmark estimation and projection methods

f. Caribbean data evaluation workshop

As noted above, basic data deficiencies prevented development of informative assessments through SEDAR 14. Participants recommended holding data review workshops before future assessments are considered in the Caribbean region. These workshops should catalog basic data and address alternative assessment methods that will accommodate the available data. Similar recommendations were made during SEDAR 14.

ACTION: Recommendations addressing each item

11. Regional Management Coordination

a. Council Activities Updates

GMFMC

SAFMC

CFMC

b. SERO Outlook

c. SEFSC Outlook

ACTION: Address any potential workload concerns

12. Budget Update

13. Other Business

14. Next Meeting

March/April 2008, CFMC host.

ACTION: Select date and general location for next meeting

15. Adjourn