

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

May 5, 2008

St. Thomas, USVI

OVERVIEW

1. Introduction and Opening Remarks
2. Agenda Review
3. Election of Chair

Alex Chester was elected Chair at the February 2007 meeting. Alex retired from NOAA Fisheries in January 2008, so the Chair is now vacant. George Geiger is vice-Chair.

4. Approval of Minutes: October 2007 Meeting

Attachment 1: STCOct07_SummaryFINAL.pdf

The last meeting was held October 2 – 3, 2007.

5. Update on Recent Activities

- a. Recently Completed Activities

SEDAR 15: SA Red Snapper and Greater Amberjack

Completed. The RW determined that for the 3 stocks the assessment data were adequate, the methods appropriate, and the results acceptable. The panel supported the DW and RW recommendations and said establishment of a fishery independent abundance index is most critical. It recommended the red snapper be reassessed 3 to 5 years after new management measures are introduced, depending on managers' concerned about the status of the stock.

- b. Current Assessment Activities

SEDAR 16: King Mackerel

Data workshop completed. Completion of the data spreadsheet and data workshop report experiencing considerable delay. Data were not approved by the DW panel as scheduled (in fact, this is still pending). Still working on FL Trip Ticket CPUE and historical recreational catch estimates. First draft models not provided to the AW panel within 2 weeks of the AW as scheduled. Given these delays, it is highly unlikely that final model results will be available at the completion of the AW.

ATTACHMENT 2: A2_SEDAR16Tasks.pdf

SEDAR 17: SA Spanish Mackerel, Vermilion Snapper

2008 workshops scheduled and TORs approved. Otolith reading and analysis are on track: VS coverage - MARMAP is early 1980s-2007 (Reading and analysis are complete.), SEFSC Beaufort is 1980s-2007 (10,100 new are read and analysis is beginning.). SM coverage – SEFSC Panama City is through 2007 (being read now).

SEDAR 18: Red Drum

Ongoing. 2009 workshops proposed – DW (Feb 9-13), AW (June 1-5), RW (October 19-23). Lead assessment agencies: South Atlantic - ASMFC TC/States. Gulf of Mexico: SEFSC Miami.

SEDAR 19: SA & GOM Hogfish, SA white grunt

Planning underway. Lead assessment agencies: hogfish – State of Florida; white grunt – SEFSC – Beaufort lab. Tentative dates are scheduled. Council approval of dates, TORs and participants pending.

c. Other Activities

As instructed at the October 2007 Steering Committee meeting, 3 special topic workshops were organized for 2008: 2 procedural workshops addressing indices and catchability and a data evaluation workshop addressing Caribbean area data. These workshops will address topics identified by various SEDAR workshops and peer review panels. Funding was initially provided in the SEDAR Budget earlier this year. However, SEDAR staff submitted funding proposals to NOAA Fisheries under a program made available to the Councils to improve peer review processes. The proposals were approved, allowing us to slightly expand the scope of the projects and reduce the overall SEDAR budget burden.

SEDAR Procedural Workshop 1: Indices

The Indices workshop is scheduled for October 14-17, 2008, at the SEFSC in Miami. Nine participants are expected: 7 from the SEFSC (Miami and Pascagoula labs), one from MARMAP (SC DNR), and a SAFMC staff scientist. The organizing committee (Walter Ingram and Julie Neer) are discussing topics to cover and have begun assigning tasks to participants who will be responsible for producing analysis or summary documents prior to the workshop. The objective is a “best practices” guide to aid in development and selection of indices for future SEDAR assessments.

SEDAR Procedural Workshop 2: Catchability

The Catchability workshop will be held November 17-20, 2009 in the Atlanta, GA area. The organizing committee (Rich Methot, Clay Porch, John Carmichael, and Julie Neer) developed a list of topic options, mostly focusing on fishery-dependent issues, and are continuing to work on finalizing those topics and begin tasking specific individuals with summary and briefing documents. The objective is to develop procedures for accounting for catchability changes in fishery-dependent CPUE observations and develop boundaries for the parameters required to apply those procedures. Participants encompasses a wide variety of affiliations and

expertise, including Council SSC and AP members; university researchers; and SEFSC, NWFSC, and NEFSC representatives.

SEDAR Data Evaluation Workshop 1: Caribbean Data Review

This workshop will be held January 26-29, 2009 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The organizing committee (Garciela Garcia-Moliner (CFMC), Barbara Kojis (CFMC SSC), Nancie Cummings, Todd Gedamke, Clay Porch, and Steve Turner (SEFSC), Joe Kimmel (SERO), John Carmichael and Julie Neer) have begun establishing objectives and identifying information sources and participants. The intent is to include agency personnel and researchers in the Caribbean with access to various data sources, fishermen with the knowledge to evaluate those data sources, and analysts who can recommend appropriate methods to analyze the available data. The objective is to develop a list of reliable data sets and candidate species for future assessments.

6. Review of SEDAR Update Process

The SEDAR Guidelines detail the process for completing and reviewing SEDAR assessment updates. The following is taken directly from the SEDAR guidelines:

5.2 Assessment Updates

Once an assessment is approved through SEDAR, the basic framework of input data and model configuration may be updated in the future by adding additional years of data. It is intended that the update process should be considerably less time consuming and require less manpower than benchmark assessments. Minor modifications and changes to input data and modeling techniques may also be incorporated in updates, although in all instances a strict update, defined as only including incorporation of additional data into the previous framework, will be prepared.

The general update process is described below. Each Council is allowed latitude to develop a more detailed process to conduct assessment updates.

The SEDAR Steering Committee will approve and schedule requests for assessment updates and determine the entity which will take lead in conducting the assessment update. The lead Council shall establish a specific submission date for the final update report.

SEDAR staff shall provide documentation including the process overview, general scheduling and generic terms of reference for consideration by the Council and its SSC.

The lead Council will provide administrative support for the update workshop and any additional meetings or conference calls required to complete the update. This will include providing workshop invitations and travel information notices to appointed participants. This will also include recording the workshop and providing copies of the recordings to SEDAR staff for inclusion in the Administrative Record.

The Council or Councils involved in the update assessment shall make appointments to the update workshop panel in accordance with their SEDAR appointment guidelines. The Regional Administrator and Science Center Director shall designate appropriate participants from their staff.

Oversight and review of assessment updates will be provided by each Council's SSC. Council SSC's shall establish specific terms of reference for the update assessment, including determining acceptable changes and modifications to the benchmark assessment

procedures and analyses. The update assessment shall provide current values for all inputs and outputs provided in the original benchmark assessment.

The Council shall appoint a update workshop chair, and it is suggested that the chair be a representative of the SSC. The chair or another council designee shall present workshop findings to their council, including its various committees as requested by Council leadership. The lead analyst for the update assessment shall provide the technical presentation required for the SSC review, similar to the presentations expected at a benchmark review panel.

Prior to beginning the update, the SSC shall provide a written report to the Council describing the terms of reference and suggested schedule for the update. Following the update, the SSC shall provide a written Consensus Summary and Advisory Report to the Council detailing their review of the update. The Council shall provide copies of these reports to the SEDAR Program Manager for inclusion in the SEDAR Administrative Record. The Consensus Summary and Advisory Report should follow the same format as those prepared for SEDAR benchmark assessments.

All documentation standards of SEDAR workshops apply to assessment updates. Working papers, Assessment Reports, and the Consensus Summary and Advisory Report shall be provided to the SEDAR coordinator for inclusion in the Administrative Record and website posting.

7. Future Shark-HMS SEDAR Process

Two shark complex assessments have been conducted under the auspices of SEDAR: SEDAR 11 addressed large coastal sharks and SEDAR 13 addressed small coastal sharks. These were organized by SEFSC staff at the Panama City laboratory in cooperation with SEDAR and NOAA Fisheries HMS staff. The next shark assessments are tentatively scheduled for SEDAR 22 in 2010, but issues related to oversight and coordination remain unresolved. The Steering Committee will need to determine whether future shark assessments should be handled as other SEDAR assessments and therefore coordinated through SEDAR staff and involving SAFMC administrative efforts, or whether they will be handled separately through SEFSC. Some guideline modifications may be required to fully incorporate sharks into SEDAR, as HMS fills many of the roles mandated to the Councils but lacks some of the Council mandated committees such as an SSC and separate AP.

If the Steering Committee determines to treat shark assessments similar to other SEDAR assessments with regard to coordination and administration, SEDAR staff will develop a list of potential guidelines modifications for consideration at a future meeting.

ACTION: Determine an appropriate process for coordinating and conducting SEDAR/HMS shark assessments.

8. Schedule Review

Attachment 3: SEDAR_PlanSchedule_March2008.pdf

Attachment 4: Status Overview 2007Q4.pdf

a. Priority benchmark assessments for 2010/2011 MSRA requirements

Attachment 3 summarizes status determinations through the end of 2008.

The Steering Committee receives regular reports on stock status determinations and future assessment scheduling of the stocks determined by NOAA Fisheries to be overfished or experiencing overfishing.

Stocks that are overfished/overfishing and therefore subject to the RMSA provisions mandating catch limits to prevent overfishing by 2010 that will not be assessed by 2010:

South Atlantic: red grouper, black grouper, Warsaw grouper, speckled hind, Nassau grouper

Gulf of Mexico: none

Caribbean: Grouper 1, Grouper 2, Snapper 1, Parrotfishes

b. Update assessments

Consider modifications to scheduled updates.

c. Sharks

Consider tentative shark SEDAR scheduling.

ACTION: Consider Schedule Changes

9. Prioritized Data Needs

Attachment 5: SEDAR Research Needs July2006.pdf

Attachment 6: SAFMC Research Plan

The Steering Committee directed each Council to direct its SSC to address research and monitoring needs and priorities. 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. At the Fall 2007 meeting the Committee reminded the Councils of its intent to address questions 1 - 4 (above) at the Spring 2008 meeting.

Attachment 5 was presented to the Committee in August 2006. The general needs remain and have changed little.

ACTION:

1. Each Council report on its SSC progress toward developing research priorities
2. Address the 4 research prioritization objectives

10. Procedural Issues

Attachment: A7_S16DWZalesComment.pdf

a. Determination of Best Available Science

The Steering Committee has discussed the role of Council SSC's with regard to reviewing and approving SEDAR stock assessments, and agreed at previous meetings that the intention of SEDAR is to produce assessments that fulfill the mandates of best available science. However, determination of best available science is a role that traditionally has fallen to SSCs, and SSCs seem to expect that it is their responsibility to recommend whether or not SEDAR assessments represent best available science.

The Steering Committee is asked to discuss whether the intention is that approval of an assessment should constitute best available science, and if so, to encourage the council's to convey this intention to their SSCs. This may trigger a need for clarification of the specific meaning of 'best available science', and in particular whether it applies to the general assessment framework and data recommendations or to the specific numbers that are available upon assessment review.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: The steering committee should state whether or not SEDAR review panel's approval of an assessment is adequate determination of best available science. Councils must clearly convey their SSCs role in reviewing SEDAR assessments.

b. Management Information Development

The lack of a completed management history well in advance of the SEDAR 15 King mackerel data workshop became a major issue. A table of regulatory changes was not available to the analysts until the start of the meeting. Therefore significant regulatory changes were not included in the initial dataset development, necessitating considerable post-DW work to complete abundance indices and removing a critical review opportunity.

Currently, appropriate Council staff and SERO are tasked with completing this requirement, but the complexity of the regulatory program and various travel and holiday related delays combined to prevent completion of the task as desired. In addition, analysts indicated that the initial deadline which called for completion within 60d of the data workshop was inadequate. SEDAR staff devoted considerable effort trying to obtain complete management information, including repeated follow-ups with Council and SERO staff. See the comment from Bob Zales regarding this issue following the SEDAR 16 Data Workshop (Attachment 7).

An additional issue involves identification of state regulations which may differ from federal regulations but nonetheless impact the datasets used in the assessment. No one is willing to address this aspect of the situation, so determining state regulations falls to SEDAR coordinators who lack historical knowledge of the fisheries and direct contacts with state agency representatives.

Management information is critical to the success and acceptance of the SEDAR process. It is not simply an academic exercise or filler material for the report. King

mackerel has one of the most involved regulatory histories in the Southeast. The management and regulatory history should be completed by those who are most familiar with the information, SERO and Council staff. Additionally, the importance of the completing this information in a timely fashion must not be overlooked.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Continue to impress on the Regional Office and Council Staff the importance of the management information. Encourage SERO staff to take a larger role, perhaps a leading role, in completing the SEDAR Management Information Worksheet. This information needs to be complete by the data scoping call, which takes place ~2 months prior to the DW.

c. Assessment workshop objectives & Process

The initial objective of SEDAR Assessment Workshops (AW) was to start with a 'clean slate' on Monday and end with a complete model and report on Friday. It was envisioned that the panel would make all configuration decisions, review results and evaluate uncertainty, and interpret the findings and draft a report. Simply put, this is unrealistic and completely impractical. The models are simply too complex and the necessary documentation too involved to accomplish such a task in a single week.

The FL FWRI approached this challenge by scheduling 2 AWs when assessing mutton snapper. At the first a suite of candidate models were explored and refined. At the second the chosen models were evaluated and further refined, but much of the effort was devoted to recommending and interpreting results. A similar approach was considered by the Steering Committee but rejected due to cost and time constraints. Instead, the steering Committee suggested that the analytical team should be charged with completing the models and providing them to the AW panel prior to the AW. The AW panel would then devote its time to refining the models, evaluating uncertainty, selecting a preferred configuration, and interpreting results.

This has not happened. In fact, for SEDAR 15, data changes arose after the AW that resulted in significant output changes within a few weeks of the RW. The AW panel was afforded little opportunity to review or comment. It is highly unlikely at this point that any models will be available for the SEDAR 16 AW panel prior to the workshop. Models were not available for initial discussion during a scheduled conference call (April 24) as required on the SEDAR 15 schedule. Data delays are the usual culprit, but allowing additional time between the DW and AW and encouraging DW participants to get started earlier are not making much of a dent in data delays.

The end result is that AW panels continue to be placed in a position that makes it impossible for them to complete their TORs. The Steering Committee must find a way to ensure that complete candidate models are available at the start of the AW. The AW must be provided an opportunity to review and approve the assessments before they are presented to the RW. The AWs are expected to provide the local knowledge that is critical to support of the process in light of the independent peer review panel, but they cannot do this if they do not receive complete models.

No questions have been raised regarding AW TORs, the problem lies instead with implementation of the AW process.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

Deadlines imposed for model completion and the requirement to present operational models at the start of the AW must receive greater respect. Lead analysts must approach the AW as a time to refine the model and evaluate results, not as a time to develop model structure. Critical personnel must be given the time and resources that the process requires. All participants must make an effort to ensure SEDAR coordinators are aware of progress as well as the unexpected challenges. Communication must be a two-way street.

d. Completion of assessment workshop reports.

With the exception of review workshop consensus reports prepared by CIE appointees, securing adequate written reports of SEDAR workshop decisions is an ongoing challenge. Experience with criticisms of SEDAR decisions, such as those posed to the SEDAR 10 (gag) and SEDAR 12 (GOM red grouper) assessments, indicates that inadequate documentation is a more prevalent threat to assessment acceptance than incorrect or inadequate decisions. Inadequacies in previous documentation efforts have also created difficulties for efforts to update previous benchmarks. The SEDAR Steering Committee is often asked to address the documentation process, and Committee decisions have led to increased structure in documentation activities over time.

The current issue relates to development of the Assessment Workshop reports. Initially, preparing the assessment workshop report was loosely assigned to the entire AW panel. However, many participants, particularly those representing the SSC, were seldom able to devote the necessary time required to complete a report. Such appointees also lack the expertise in the modeling techniques required to fully document the model and its results. The process was changed to divide the AW report into 2 primary components: a proceedings section intended to document group decisions, address AW TORs, and assigned to the panel and led by an SSC appointee; and an assessment section intended to document the model structure and results, assigned to the lead analyst.

After trying this approach for multiple assessments it is clear that it is not practical and changes should be considered. A primary problem is that nearly all text of the proceedings falls to an SSC appointee; few other participants are willing to contribute. Getting more than 1 or 2 SSC members to attend is very difficult, so the work typically falls to a single individual. This individual is often required to serve as rapporteur for the report as well, which hampers their ability to fully participate in discussions. Other workshop participants have questioned whether they are part of the AW panel or part of the analytical team, and consider the analytical team separate and therefore not responsible for any of the proceedings text. (in fact, they are part of the panel and all panelists are encouraged to participate).

A major problem lies in the completion of the assessment model. Assessment models are never complete at the AW, thus the AW panel does not have an opportunity to review results and prepare a complete proceeding report during the AW. Unfortunately, few SSC appointees have time to devote to SEDAR following the AW, so drafting an adequate and complete proceedings report is virtually impossible. What is submitted typically provides inadequate justification of critical decisions. Finally, significant decisions may be made by the analysts following the AW. Under the current design such decisions cannot be addressed in the proceedings. None of the SSC appointees are content with the current process and as a result SSC members are increasingly unwilling

to participate in SEDAR. Some SSC members have also suggested that preparing assessments is the responsibility of SEFSC and expecting them to take the lead in documenting assessment decisions is inappropriate.

The intention underlying the AW process was that it would operate much like the assessment panel (AP) meetings that predated SEDAR. In those, the analysts presented a complete assessment that was prepared in advance of the meeting. The AP reviewed the assessment, perhaps suggested modifications and sensitivities, then prepared a report that was included discussion of uncertainties and interpretation of results. The key part of this process was a complete assessment available for the panel to consider. However, since complete assessments are not available at the start of SEDAR AWs, this model does not work.

It is clear from ongoing issues with recent assessments that documentation of decisions must be improved.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: assign completion of the entire AW report to the analytical team. This report should document all assessment decisions made at the AW. Typically the SEFSC analysts are most knowledgeable in the decisions that are needed, the consequences of the alternatives, and the ultimate effects of these decisions on the assessment. Importantly, this would ensure that all decisions are documented, even those that are made after AW conclusion. It is likely that SSC participation would increase, because the need to devote considerable time and effort to report completion after the AW would be removed. This would also place responsibility on documenting assessment decisions with those whose job responsibilities include preparing assessments of federally managed stocks. The provision that all panelists are expected to contribute to documentation efforts should be retained. The change suggested applies to assignment of lead responsibility to report production.

A likely objection is the additional writing responsibility placed on the analysts. SEDAR developed the current approach in an attempt to reduce such burdens, but it simply has not produced adequate documentation. The risk in maintaining the status quo is that critical decisions will go undocumented and more supplementary reviews, such as that conducted for SEDARs 10 and 12, will be required in the future.

e. SEDAR Data Spreadsheet and Data Compiler

The Steering Committee supported a proposal from workshop participants to develop an input data spreadsheet, to assign an individual to compile and manage the spreadsheet, and to require that the DW panel approve the data in the spreadsheet. After approval, it is passed to the analysts for use. During and after the assessment workshop, the spreadsheet is updated to reflect any changes or additions.

Considerable problems arose with this task in the recent SEDAR 16 (king mackerel) data workshop. There was little to compile due to the lack of data during the workshop. The individual who volunteered to serve as data compiler was not part of an assessment group and did not expect to be encumbered by the task for the entire run of the assessment. However, given that we continue to receive data revisions and updates up to a couple weeks before the review workshop, it is clear that the data compiler position

will require an extended commitment and really should be assigned to a member of an assessment team.

For SEDAR 15 the data compiler was a member of the assessment group and work closely with the analysts to ensure data were kept up to date and accessible to all participants. This approach worked quite well. (The individual also prepared a candidate model for the assessment.) A minor revision to increase efficiency and reduce transcription errors was proposed and supported by the SEDAR 17 participants. The change will be that each data work group leader will be responsible for completing the spreadsheet sections documenting their data. The compiler will then keep track of any changes or revisions throughout the process.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Assign the data compiler task to a member of the assessment team. Ensure that this person has the resources and supervisory support necessary to address this task.

f. State Cooperative Statistics Agreements

The SAFMC suggested that Councils modify their cooperative statistics agreements with the states to include SEDAR. This is seen as a means of encouraging participation by SSC members and other state agency personnel in SEDAR workshops.

g. Post-SEDAR revisions and updates

The SEDAR guidelines allow considerable flexibility for Councils and their SSCs to interact with assessment analysts and address assessment issues following completion of a SEDAR peer review. Flexibility is tied to resolving minor data corrections or calculation errors and refining projection estimates. It is not intended that such flexibility should extend to significant assessment modifications or to changing any decisions made related to data or important population parameters. It is expected that any assessment updates or corrections will be provided to SEDAR staff for inclusion in the administrative record, which includes posting to the SEDAR website.

In the Fall of 2007 revisions were made to the SEDAR 10 assessments of GOM to correct several issues identified by the SSC during their review. No notification of the revisions were provided to SEDAR staff, so no updated reports were posted to the SEDAR website. In fact, SEDAR staff had no knowledge of the revisions until further controversies arose a few weeks ago and requests were made for copies of the revised assessments.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: SEDAR guidelines should be modified to require any analysts revising or updating an approved SEDAR assessment to provide copies of the revised assessment to SEDAR staff for inclusion in the AR and posting to the SEDAR website. Councils should also encourage their staff to communicate with SEDAR staff to ensure the AR and website are accurate and up to date.

ACTION: Recommendations for each item

11. Increasing Assessment Productivity

Revisions to the MSA are expected to impose further burden on the limited assessment resources in the Southeast. Requirements to implement regulations to end overfishing by 2010 and to implement OFL/ACL strategies for all stocks by 2011 will require considerable quantitative information. Requirements to manage by ACLs will add to this burden.

The Committee is asked to consider mechanisms for increasing productivity. Similar requests have been made of the committee in the past, but the problems seem to lie in the complexity of the models and datasets and the fact that many stocks have never been assessed quantitatively. Devising means to speed things up is challenging when current deadlines are simply not met. SEDAR 16 provides a great example as noted in several places previously in this document. Data simply were not complete at the end of the DW and some critical data just recently became available, 10 weeks following the data workshop and only 2 weeks prior to the assessment workshop. SEDAR 16 was intentionally placed on an accelerated schedule, and the results so far suggest reducing the time between workshops is simply infeasible.

Several things should be considered to increase production and reduce the time required.

1. Planning. The SEDAR schedule must be stable. Changes in species within 18 months of a data workshop should be avoided as the time consuming work of analyzing age structures typically starts at least a year before the assessment begins. Unless, of course, resources are made available to allow real-time aging of structures.

2. Advance preparation. Those responsible for critical datasets must begin compiling those datasets well in advance of the data workshop. SEDAR coordinators schedule a data scoping call at least 2 months prior to the data workshop. Data compilers and providers must begin working on their datasets at that time. Participants must bring their data and analytical tools to the workshop so revisions can be made and reviewed by the group.

3. Communication. All parties must communicate with each other to prevent lost effort, such as occurs when data are compiled in a manner that causes problems with other components of the assessment. Analysts must communicate problems and concerns with data and preliminary analyses in advance of the Data Workshop so that revisions can be made and discussed.

4. Deadlines. SEDAR deadlines must be respected and adhered to. Working papers must be prepared in advance; a panel cannot reasonably review papers that are not available until mid-way through the workshop.

5. Project dedication. A major problem in every SEDAR is that key personnel often have multiple responsibilities and are often pulled in many directions at once. As a result, work for a SEDAR workshop tends to be delayed until the workshop approaches, leaving little time for unexpected issues and delays.

6. Realistic expectations. SEDAR was designed to address each and every concern identified, and many participants expect that all problems will be addressed in the current assessment. To some extent this was intentional, to avoid the carrying over of potentially critical issues that was common with the pre-SEDAR approach. However, SEDAR coordinators increasingly find themselves pushing panels to make simplifying assumptions or to identify issues that simply cannot be addressed due to time constraints. Attempts to increase productivity must be carefully considered to prevent increasing this tendency to the detriment of assessment

confidence. The comments from Bob Zales following the SEDAR 16 Data Workshop are an example.

ACTION: Consider means of increasing assessment productivity to maintain statutory compliance

12. Future Procedural Workshops

The following procedural workshop topics were provided at the October 2007 meeting:

- 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

Topics 1 and 2 will be addressed in 2008.

Additional topics was suggested by the SEDAR 15 Review Panel:

- 1) Objectively evaluating data weighting in objective functions
- 2) Develop measures to quantify uncertainty in assessment models incorporating weighted likelihood objective functions.

ACTION: Recommend topics for the next series of procedural workshops.

13. Regional Management Coordination

- a. Update from April 22-23 Regional Operations Meeting
- b. Evaluate whether to continue this activity via SEDAR Steering Committee
- c. Council Activities Updates
 - GMFMC
 - SAFMC
 - CFMC
- d. SERO Outlook
- e. SEFSC Outlook

ACTION: Suggestions or recommendations for Council consideration.

14. Budget Update

15. Other Business

16. Next Meeting

October/November 2008, SAFMC host.

17. Adjourn