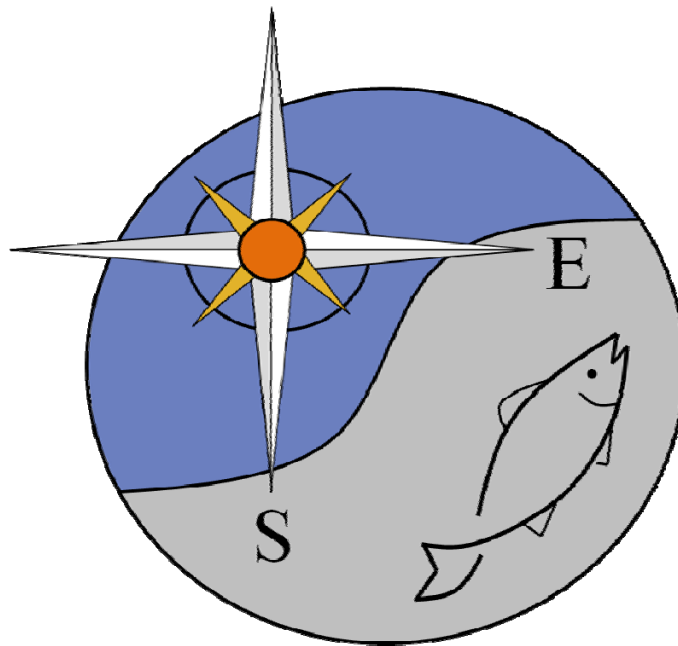


SEDAR



SEDAR Steering Committee

Meeting Brief

May 18, 2012

Meeting Via Webinar

PURPOSE

This meeting is convened to:

- Review 2013 Project Dates
- Review 2014-15 Assessment Priorities
- Discuss Assessment Productivity
- Discuss review TORs for update and standard assessments
- Review the SEDAR budget

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Documents:

- Attachment 1. October 2011 Meeting Summary
- Attachment 2. SEDAR Assessment Schedule
- Attachment 3. Calibration Workshop Outcomes Letter
- Attachment 4. Schedule Planning Worksheet
- Attachment 5. PEG Letter
- Attachment 6. GMFMC SSC Update Review Guidance
- Attachment 7. Role of Industry Scientists
- Attachment 8. 2012 Budget Update

1. Introduction

1.1. Documents

Agenda

Attachment 1. October 2011 Meeting Summary

1.2. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

Approve May 2011 Summary

2. Activities Update

2.1. Documents

Attachment 2. SEDAR Assessment Schedule

Attachment 3. Calibration Workshop Outcomes Letter

2.2. 2011 Projects

2.2.1. SEDAR 25 Benchmark

Stocks: South Atlantic black sea bass and tilefish

Coordinator: Kari Fenske

Progress Summary: SEDAR 25 completed in Fall 2011.

Action Items: None

2.2.2. SEDAR 26 Benchmark

Stocks: Caribbean Silk snapper, Queen snapper, and Redtail parrotfish

Coordinator: Julie A. Neer

Progress Summary: SEDAR 26 completed in Fall 2011. Length based analysis looking for changes in M over time were prepared during the project and accepted by the Review Panel. None produced quantitative status determinations. Qualitative results suggested overfishing was not occurring. No overfished determinations were made.

Action Items: None

2.2.3. SEDAR 27 Benchmark

Stocks: Gulf of Mexico Menhaden and Southeast Yellowtail snapper

Coordinator: Julie A. Neer

Progress Summary: SEDAR 27 completed in Fall 2011. Gulf of Mexico Menhaden was review but not accepted. The Gulf Commission is continuing to work with the SEFSC (outside of the SEDAR Process) in an attempt to produce an assessment useful for management. The assessment of yellowtail snapper was not included in the review

due to completion delays. Instead, a desk review was organized through CIE with the final reports expected on 10 July 2012.

Action Items: None

2.2.4. Gulf Updates

Stocks: Gulf of Mexico gray triggerfish and vermilion snapper

SEDAR Contact: Ryan Rindone

Progress summary: Both gray triggerfish and vermilion snapper required additional analyses by the Science Center following the last Gulf SSC meeting. The Gulf SSC will be directed to complete a summary report of their review of each species during their June meeting.

Action Items: None

2.3. 2012 Projects

2.3.1. SEDAR 28 Benchmark

Stocks: Gulf and South Atlantic Spanish mackerel and cobia

Coordinator: Kari Fenske, Ryan Rindone

Progress Summary: Underway. The Data Workshop was held February 6-10 in Charleston, SC; the Assessment Workshop will be held May 7-11 in Miami, FL and the Review Workshop will be held August 6-10 in Atlanta, GA. The Data Workshop report was due for release on March 21, 2012, but as of 30 April, it is still not complete. At this writing, prior to the AW, it is expected that an incomplete version of the DW report will be provided to the AW participants so that they can begin their assignments. The Committee will be briefed at the meeting on the latest progress information.

Action Items: None

2.3.2. SEDAR 29 Standard

Stocks: HMS Gulf of Mexico blacktip shark

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress Summary: Underway. The in-person workshop portion of the Standard assessment for Gulf of Mexico blacktip sharks was held in late March 2012. Several follow-up webinars have already been held, with one remaining scheduled for late May. The Assessment is slated to be sent out for CIE desk review 4 June 2012.

Action Items: None

2.3.3. SEDAR 30 Benchmark

Stocks: Caribbean blue tang and queen triggerfish

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress Summary: Planning – Plans are complete for all meetings associated with SEDAR 30. This project will use a modified data workshop procedure of one-day scoping meetings held on each of the islands of the US Caribbean to gather information from the fisherman and other interested parties. The data scoping workshops will be held July 17 (St. Croix), July 18 (St. Thomas), and July 19 (Rincon, Puerto Rico). The AW will be held in Miami, October 16-18, 2012, and the RW will be held February 4-7, 2013, in San Juan.

Action Items: None

2.3.4. SEDAR 31 Benchmark

Stocks: Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper

Coordinator: Ryan Rindone

Progress Summary: Underway. The Data Workshop will be held August 20-24th, 2012, in Pensacola; the Assessment Workshop January 28th to February 1st, 2013, in Miami; and the Review Workshop April 29th to May 3rd, 2013, in Gulfport.

Action Items: None

2.3.5. South Atlantic Updates

Stocks: South Atlantic vermilion snapper and red porgy

SEDAR Contact: Kari Fenske

Progress Summary: SEFSC staff are currently requesting data for these updates. The SA Council requests that the assessments be available for SSC review at the SSC meeting scheduled for October 23-25, 2012.

Action Items: None

2.3.6. FL FWCC Updates

Stocks: Mutton Snapper

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Progress Summary: The State of Florida intends to proceed with an Update assessment for Florida Mutton Snapper in 2012. This assessment was listed as a Standard on the schedule discussed during the last Steering Committee meeting in October 2011, although at that time FL Staff had not verified the type of assessment intended. SEDAR staff contacted FWCC following the steering committee, and verified that an Update is intended based on there being no new data sources to consider. A project completion date has not been determined at this time.

Action Items: None

2.3.7. SEDAR Stock Assessment Data Identification Workshop

Coordinator: Ryan Rindone

Progress summary: The Planning Committee for this project recommends conducting a single workshop combining data and assessment phases, rather than the separate workshops as previously directed by the Steering Committee. The data workshop was intended to bring together individual scientists to develop metadata and categorize respective projects. It was suggested by the committee that this effort had already been conducted multiple times elsewhere in the Gulf. For example, research grants often require that data be provided to regional databases and researchers can voluntarily submit data to such sources even if not required to do so. The Planning Committee suggests that stock assessments and efforts to evaluate episodic events will benefit from improved understanding of such databases. The workshop would begin at 1 p.m. on November 13th and conclude at 12 p.m. on November 15th.

Modified Workshop Proposal:

To further develop an understanding of these databases, the workshop will convene database managers to discuss how to access their available data. Other participants, including fisheries scientists, SSC members, other members of the scientific community and the public will have the opportunity to work through a case study of an episodic event in the Gulf of Mexico, gaining direct experience identifying data needs and retrieving data pertinent to their understanding of a particular episodic event and its potential impacts to a particular species or group of species. Workshop participants will then discuss how to incorporate available data into existing stock assessment models, discussing the development of tools to facilitate event identification and data integration. Participants will conclude the workshop with a discussion about research recommendations, concerning continuing data needs and advances in modeling techniques. The product of the workshop will be a report detailing the available databases, the case study activity, proposed modeling techniques, and other research recommendations.

- **Action Items:** Discuss and consider the modified workshop proposal.

2.3.8. MRFSS/MRIP Calibration Workshop

Coordinator: John Carmichael

Progress summary: The Steering Committee directed that a workshop be held to address changes in the recreational catch estimates resulting from the transition from MRFSS to MRIP. SEDAR collaborated with NOAA staff and the MRIP program to convene an MRFSS/MRIP Calibration Workshop, held March 27-29, 2012, in Raleigh NC. Calibration procedures were recommended, and a subgroup of workshop participants are currently developing calibration values. Calibrated catch estimates are expected to be available by July 1, 2012. See Attachment 3 for a summary of workshop outcomes.

2.3.9. SEDAR Website Revision

Coordinator: Kari Fenske

Progress summary: The Steering Committee first discussed a SEDAR website re-design in October 2010. In May 2011 the SEDAR Steering committee reviewed and approved a proposed SEDAR website design update. During July-October 2011 there were

discussions between SEDAR and the SEFSC regarding details, such as the overall format of the site, since the intention of the Steering Committee was to continue with SEFSC hosting. Since then, the project has stalled out, and questions remain as to whether staff are available at the Center to do the actual site build, and how SEDAR staff will be able to gain access to make changes and modifications to the site efficiently.

Action Items: Consider pursuing alternative website hosting

2.4. Issues and Concerns

2.4.1. MARMAP PROGRAM FUNDING DECREASE

The MARMAP program has experienced stagnant funding over the last several years and received a 40% cut this year (May 2012 – April 2013). While the program has attempted to absorb the decline without decreasing productivity, current resources are inadequate to keep up with demand for updated life history and age composition information. For example, it is unlikely that MARMAP will be able to evaluate life history and fishery independent age composition information for South Atlantic blueline tilefish for SEDAR 32, nor for South Atlantic gag, red grouper and snowy grouper for SEDAR 36.

2.5. ACTIONS

- Where required, listed under each topic above.

3. SEDAR Assessment Schedule

3.1. Documents

Attachment 4. Schedule Planning Worksheet

Attachment 5. PEG Letter

3.2. Overview

The Committee is provided the preliminary project schedules for 2013 assessments and asked to review stocks to be assessed in 2014 and 2015. The Steering Committee should provide general guidance on the number of assessment slots available to each cooperator in 2014 and 2015.

Cooperator representatives should consider 2014 and 2015 assessment needs prior to this meeting and prepare a list of stocks for consideration. As a starting point, candidate 2014 stocks identified at the last meeting are provided in the table below.

A comment was received from the Pew Environmental Group requesting that speckled hind and Warsaw grouper in the Gulf of Mexico be added to the schedule.

The South Atlantic Council is expecting two additional analyses during 2012 and 2013 that are not included within the SEDAR framework: an evaluation of red snapper due to

the SSC in Spring 2013 and updated projections of black sea bass due to the SSC by Fall 2013.

2014 Stock Assessment Priorities, from October 2011 Steering Committee Meeting

SAFMC/Commission (Beaufort)		GMFMC/CFMC (Miami)		HMS (PC)	FL FWCC & Other
White Grunt B Scamp B Red Snapper B Black grp U Grt. amberjack U	GOM menhaden	Scamp B Black Grouper U Yellowedge grp. U Red snapper U Red grp. B Gray snapper B	Queen conch Spiny lobster	TBD	TBD

3.3. ACTIONS

- Indicate # of assessment slots per cooperator for 2014 and 2015
- Identify priority stocks for 2014 and 2015

4. Assessment Productivity

4.1. Documents

4.2. Overview

Increasing assessment productivity is a common discussion topic of this Committee, with many of the changes imposed over the years being constructed to address the need to provide more and more timely assessment information. For example, considerable changes were made in the overall assessment program in 2010, including creation of 3 levels of assessment, as a way to streamline the process and increase throughput. SEDAR has not had an opportunity to evaluate how well these recent changes will perform, as initial standard and update assessments under the new practices are currently underway. Nonetheless, experience gained over the 10 years of SEDAR's existence provides some insight into means of increasing productivity. The Steering Committee is offered these items for consideration and discussion.

- Updates as default

Update assessments should be the default assessment type following an approved benchmark. A clear need for advanced analyses or inclusion of additional new data allowed by standard and benchmark assessments is required.

- Strict TORS for Standard Assessments

Preliminary experience with standard assessments during SEDAR 25 revealed the importance of developing TORS that specify which issues will be addressed and the types of additional analyses that can be pursued. The general TORS developed for SEDAR 25 led to a level of analysis, and associated time commitment at all levels, that was indistinguishable from a benchmark assessment. Conversely, the strict TORS developed for SEDAR 29 allowed for an efficient workshop and assessment process.

- Adequate DW preparation for Benchmark Assessments

SEDAR benchmark assessments continue to suffer from delays in compiling basic information (See update on SEDAR 28 for the latest example). SEDAR expects that basic data QA/QC, compilations and summarizations, and exploratory investigations will all be completed prior to the Data Workshop. SEDAR coordinators hold a data scoping call 2 months prior to DWs to establish data submission guidelines and assignments, and data webinars 1 month prior to the workshop to review initial data compilations and identify possible delays. All data for consideration are expected to be available to the DW participants 2 weeks prior to the workshop. Despite these efforts and the addition of numerous pre-DW deadlines and markers, many data providers arrive at the DW with the intention of completing validation and compilation exercises at the workshop, and unprepared to conduct the data review and evaluation exercises that are the intended DW focus.

- Adhere to the project schedule and prioritization

Last-minute changes in the SEDAR project schedule severely impede assessment throughput. Data preparation, especially life history evaluations, age structure interpretation and survey index preparation, can begin as much as a year prior to a DW. Forcing data providers to change species causes a backlog of ageing and analytical work that is difficult to overcome.

- Eliminate the AW from Benchmark Assessments

Allowing the analysts greater flexibility to conduct the analytical work could improve output. The AW phase of SEDAR is the most difficult to plan for and tends to create the biggest conflicts between the need for advanced scheduling of workshops and the realities of the work to be completed. SEDAR workshops are typically scheduled up to 12 months in advance, thereby eliminating any possibility of adapting to inevitable data delays or unexpected analytical issues. Assessment workshops are also prone to 'lost time', as the majority of participants wait on a few analysts to complete assessment runs for further consideration.

One approach to address these concerns is to abandon the AW as currently conducted. Instead, an AW panel could be assembled that can work informally with the analytical team to provide guidance via conference call or email. Several webinars could be held during the process to maintain

transparency, such as one in the early stage to review modeling approaches and one near the conclusion to discuss preliminary findings and obtain input on uncertainty evaluations.

4.3. ACTIONS

- Recommend procedural changes and provide policy guidance as necessary

5. SEDAR Procedures

5.1. Documents

Attachment 6. GMFMC SSC Update Review Guidance
Attachment 7. Role of Industry Scientists

5.2. Overview

5.2.1. TORS for Update and Standard Assessments

Under current assessment classifications, peer reviews for Update and Standard assessments are the responsibility of the Cooperator's scientific review body (e.g., SSC or Technical Committee). In creating these assessment categories, SEDAR did not provide TORS for these reviews. Therefore, it is currently up to the cooperator to establish TORS or develop other policies to ensure it obtains the necessary technical information. Staff of the Gulf Council requested that the Steering Committee consider this issue and clarify its intent with regard to TORS for reviews of standard and update assessments. The Gulf Council has developed guidance for their SSC (Attachment 6)

5.2.2. Role of Industry Scientists in Stock Assessment Programs

At the previous Steering Committee meeting the role of industry scientists in assessment programs was raised. Staff was asked to provide information on how other regions handle this issue; findings are provided in Attachment 7.

5.3. ACTIONS

- Provide guidance on the need for SEDAR to develop framework TORS for reviews of Update and Standard stock assessments; if such TORS are desired, identify the entity which will produce and approve them.

6. Budget Report

Attachment 8. 2012 Budget Update

7. Other Business

Kari Fenske is departing SEDAR to pursue a graduate degree as of August 2, 2012.

8. Next Meetings

1. October 2012, Charleston SC
 Finalize stocks for 2014
 Preliminary stocks for 2015 - 2018
2. May 2013

9. Adjourn