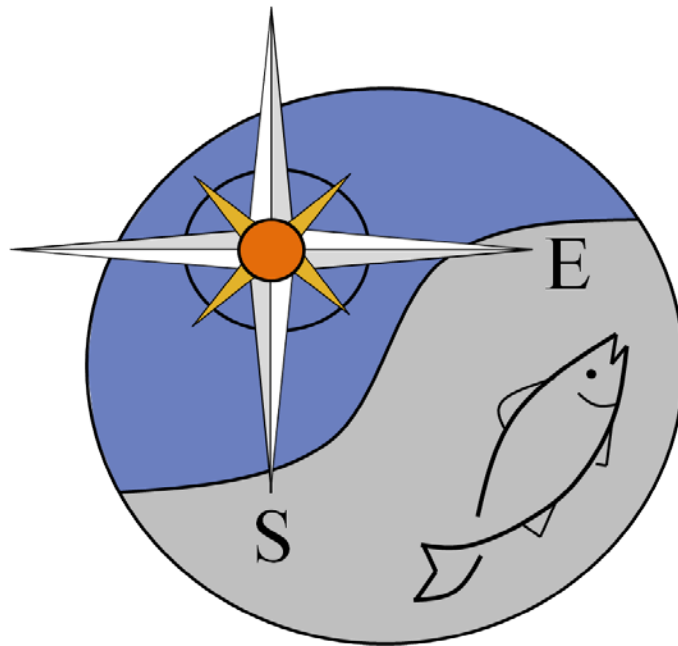


SEDAR



**SEDAR Steering Committee
DRAFT Meeting Summary DRAFT
September 20-21, 2016**

Charleston, SC

**Version: Review Draft
9/26/2016**

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ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bob Beal, ASMFC (*via Webinar*)
Karyl Brewster-Geisz, NMFS-HMS
Luiz Barbieri, FL FWC (*via Webinar*)
Patrick Campfield, ASMFC
Roy Crabtree, NMFS-SERO
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC
Michelle Duval, SAFMC
Doug Gregory, GMFMC
Marcos Hanke, CFMC, for Carlos Farchette
Clay Porch, SEFSC, for Bonnie Ponwith
Gregg Waugh, SAFMC

SEDAR STAFF

Julia Byrd
John Carmichael
Julie Neer

OBSERVERS

Joey Ballenger, SC DNR
Lora Clarke, PEW
Steve Durkee, NMFS
Dean Foster, PEW
Marcel Reichert, SC DNR
Ryan Rindone, GMFMC

WEBINAR OBSERVERS

Myra Brouwer, SAFMC
Pat Campfield, ASMFC
Chip Collier, SAFMC
Nancie Cummings, NMFS
Mike Errigo, SAFMC
Eric Fitzpatrick, NMFS
Rusty Hudson, DSF
Mandy Karnauskas, NMFS
Kate Siegfried, NMFS
Erik Williams, NMFS
Brittany Wright, Oceana
Adyan Rios, NMFS

MEETING SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review Assessment Projects Status Reports

- Supported the FL FWCC request for full SEDAR support for the black grouper benchmark assessment. Target completion in December 2017. The project will include an in-person AW workshop.
 - Cooperators: GMFMC, SAFMC
 - Estimated Participants:
 - DW: 2 SSC, 2 AP, 4 data providers per Cooperator
 - AW: 2 SSC panelists, 2 AP observers per cooperator
 - RW: 2 SSC panelists (one to serve as chair) per cooperator
 - RW chair appointed by: GMFMC
- GMFMC is addressing approvals and appointments for upcoming blueline tilefish benchmark, and should be on track for the assessment to remain on schedule

2. Consider the Research Track Assessment Process and Changes in the SEDAR SOPPS

- Approved the research track pilot for scamp
- Operational assessments merge existing update-standard, mirror standard by retaining SSC role in TORs and OA approach
- Project start up planning (tors, appointments, schedule process) remains same as existing benchmark, with open RW scheduling. DW and AW in person workshops held
- Research track does not :
 - provide management advice
 - include the most up to date data
- Research track provides
 - data evaluation & decisions
 - assessment model tool developed, evaluated
 - sensitivities and uncertainties evaluated
 - Projection approaches developed and evaluated
 - candidate reference points evaluated and discussed with regard to uncertainty and risk
 - population parameter estimates
 - Recommendations for further research and data needs. short and long term
 - Recommendations for operational assessment framework and timing
 - i.e., everything now in benchmark report except status determination
- RW will need approximate scheduling for CIE planning
- Timing of operational assessments after research track?
 - Approximately 1 year after SSC review of the research track, typical
 - May be adjusted based on what needs to be addressed, data availability, research needs, management timelines
- Direct SEDAR staff to begin drafting SOPPS changes while Research Track pilots are underway.
 - Participants for SOPPS team

- SEFSC: 1 each from the Miami, Beaufort and Panama City assessment teams, Clay Porch, Steve Turner
 - 1 from each Cooperator SSC (at least GMFMC, SAFMC, CFMC, HMS. Other cooperators are also welcome to participate)
 - SEDAR staff will chair
 - Other representation: Cooperator staff, SERO
 - Appointments by: November 1, 2016
 - Draft SOPPS review by steer committee: Fall 2017
- Consider applying aspects of the research track to the GOM gray snapper assessment now underway – flexible RW scheduling and operational assessment
 - Agreed to consider it. Direct staff to hold a webinar ASAP with principals to discuss feasibility.
 - Issues to discuss include, not limited:
 - Do participants want to consider research track for this assessment?
 - How to determine RW scheduling
 - How to fold existing progress into research track

3. Review State-Sponsored Assessment Process: Goliath Grouper Benchmark Case Study

- Supported requiring a proposal for state and other agency assessment requests, addressing the items listed in BB.

4. Address the SEDAR Assessment Schedule: identify assessment capability, determine 2018 priorities and identify projects for 2019-2020.

- See table below for 2017-2010 Assessment priorities.
- Dolphin assessment challenges were reviewed. Given expected stock structure, an Atlantic-wide system is likely required, which is beyond the scope of SEDAR. Should be considered through ICCAT or other similar international entity.

5. Review Data Best Practices TORs and Charge statement.

- Supported data best practices TORS and charge, no changes were suggested.

6. Progress Report on the Stock ID and Meristics workshop: Timing, TORs, and stocks list.

- Committee agreed that stock ID decisions have management impacts and should include review and consideration by managers (eg, SEDAR Steer, Cooperators)
- Default recommendation is that stocks are assessed along existing management boundaries or established assessment boundaries. Adequate evidence is required to divide stocks in other ways.
- Reviewed TORs for proposed workshop, suggested changes as follows:
 - TOR D under stock id, addressing the discussion of stock & management units
 - Add language to consider strength of evidence for any stock ID recommendations that result in mismatch between biological and management boundaries
 - Add language to address the risks (biological and management) & consequences of managing based on existing council or prior assessment boundaries if evidence suggests a change in boundaries should be considered
- Workshop participants

- SSC
 - Management: Council and regional office
 - Science: SEFSC & state: data, life history, surveys, spatial, tagging/movements
 - Specialized experts: genetics
- Request Independent Peer Review of the workshop report
 - 2 CIE reviewers (request genetics & ID expertise)
 - SSC reps – 2 per cooperator to include 1 as chair
 - Management representative – regional office
 - Assessment representative – SEFSC
 - Optional slot for additional expertise if required
- Workshop Report and Peer review findings will be reviewed by the SSC (or appropriate technical review body) of all cooperators affected by the stock ID recommendations
 - Note that SSC representation is also provided at the workshop
 - Each Cooperator will conduct its own review, according to its own policies. Joint meetings may be convened if deemed necessary by the affected Cooperators or the Steering Committee.
- If a change in stock ID is recommended that causes a stock to cross cooperator jurisdictions, then steps will be taken to involve all cooperators, management (Regional Office) and Science entities (Science Center) in making a decision on how to resolve the discrepancy and provide guidance on the appropriate TORs to provide the necessary and appropriate management parameters
 - Will consider a joint SSC meeting, via webinar, with subset of reps from affected SSCs to provide technical review and efficiently develop consistent, compatible recommendations by technical advisors.
 - A conference call meeting will be convened of regional and cooperator leadership to develop guidance on TORS for addressing the management-stock unit overlap, similar to what was held for blueline tilefish with the SE and NE parties
- Summarized steps in the Stock ID process:
 - Workshop
 - Peer review of workshop findings
 - SSC review of findings
 - Resolution of mis-match and overlap by jurisdictions; guidance for assessment TORs
 - Assessment proceeds
- Stocks for the first Stock ID workshop were reviewed
 - In addition, a dedicated shark workshop is planned for 2018.
 - Ultimately, multiple stock ID workshops are needed to address all stocks.
 - Recommend that future stock ID workshops focus on identifying stocks that straddle management jurisdictions. This will identify which cooperators need to be involved in which assessments.
 - Details on how to handle the overlaps can be addressed through the research track process.
 - Initial priorities are based in upcoming assessments
- Discussed blueline tilefish and the unanticipated overlap of the stock with the Gulf of Mexico management jurisdiction.

- Request a joint (MA, SA, GOM) SSC review of stock ID report via webinar. Request the SSC representatives to provide advice on stock-management unit overlap and risks of management by GMFMC council boundary.
 - Convene call – council, centers, regional offices, to resolve remaining issues and provide guidance on appropriate assessment Terms of Reference.
 - BLT schedule may need to be adjusted.
- Gave staff guidance on addressing stock ID for GOM gray snapper (SEDAR 51)
 - A stock ID workshop is planned to prepare for DW TOR addressing stock ID
 - Meet via webinars in late October to November
 - Goal is a stock ID recommendation by Dec 1, to accommodate life history data due on Jan 30.
 - Provide broad representation – science, management, genetics, SSC, Regional Office & council staff
 - Include Gulf and South Atlantic representation due to initial indications of mismatch between biologic and management boundaries.
 - Reserved the option to have joint SSC review of the stock ID outcome. This will be determined following the workshop, and based on the stock ID workshop recommendations, particularly the level of management unit-stock ID overlap.
 - Consider, if necessary due to stock overlaps with management jurisdictions, the blueline tilefish SEDAR 50 example of a management-science meeting (call) to provide guidance on how to develop assessment TORs that ensure the management needs are adequately addressed within the scientific recommendations.
- Discussed stock ID for the upcoming black grouper assessment.
 - Because the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils have an approach to address the known overlap of the stock with the management jurisdictions, both Cooperators are involved in assessment planning and development.
 - There also exists an approach to allocate yield that is agreed to by both management jurisdictions.
 - Therefore, no further discussion of black grouper stock ID is necessary.
- Clarified the role of managers and management groups, as described here, in the stock ID process:
 - Role of managers is not to make the science decision.
 - Managers role is to weigh risk and uncertainty associated with the stock boundary recommendations and their overlap with existing management boundaries, and consider how to ensure each jurisdiction's management needs are addressed within the assessment.

7. Update on the NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Prioritization Plan: Cooperator progress and SEDAR role.

- Committee was briefed on progress by Cooperators.

Next Meeting: Late Spring 2017 via Webinar

THIS REPORT WILL BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE STEERING COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING.

Table A. Assessment Schedule Summary

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|---|----------------|
| 2017 | SAFMC, GMFMC & MAFMC | Blueline Tilefish | Benchmark |
| | SAFMC | Black Sea Bass | Standard |
| | GMFMC | Gray Snapper | Benchmark |
| | GMFMC | Red Snapper | Standard |
| | FL FWCC | Black Grouper | Benchmark |
| | HMS | Sandbar Shark | Standard |
| | CFMC | Spiny Lobster, Puerto Rico | Standard |
| | CFMC | Life History | Workshop |
| | SEDAR | Stock ID & Meristics | Workshop |
| 2017/18 | SAFMC | Red Snapper, Red Grouper, Blueline Tilefish, Black Sea Bass | MRIP Revision |
| | GMFMC | Gag, Greater Amberjack, Vermilion Snapper | MRIP Revision |
| 2018 | SAFMC & GMFMC | Scamp & Yellowmouth grouper | Research Track |
| | SAFMC | Cobia | Research Track |
| | SAFMC | Greater Amberjack & Red Porgy | Standard |
| | GMFMC | Gray Triggerfish & Red Grouper | Standard |
| | SAFMC & GMFMC | King Mackerel | Research Track |
| | CFMC | Queen Trigger, Puerto Rico & St. Croix | Standard |
| | HMS | Gulf Blacktip Shark | Update |
| | GSMFC | Gulf Menhaden | SEDAR Review |
| 2019 | SAFMC | Spanish Mackerel | Standard |
| | SAFMC | Snowy Grouper | Standard |
| | HMS | Atlantic Blacktip Shark | Benchmark |
| | SEDAR | Shark Stock ID & Meristics | Workshop |
| | ASMFC | Atlantic Menhaden | SEDAR Review |
| 2020 | SAFMC & GMFMC | Scamp | Operational |
| | SAFMC | Cobia | Operational |
| PROPOSED | | | |
| 2018 | FL FWCC | Yellowtail Snapper | Benchmark |
| 2019 | GMFMC | Spanish Mackerel, Yellowedge Grouper, Tilefish, Red Drum, Cobia, Lane Snapper | Standard |
| | FL FWCC | Hogfish, mutton snapper | Update |
| 2020 | SAFMC | Red Snapper, Red Grouper | Update |
| | SAFMC | Gag, Tilefish | Standard |
| | GMFMC | Greater Amberjack, Gag, Speckled Hind, Red Snapper, Snowy Grouper | Standard |

Table B. Assessment Schedule and Preferred Timing Summary.

| APPROVED SEDAR ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE - September 2016 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|--|------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--|--|----------------|
| YEAR | South Atlantic Team | | | | | Gulf/Caribbean Team | | | | | HMS Team | | FL FWCC | Extra | SEDAR Workshop | ASMFC GSMFC | | | | | | | |
| | QTR | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2016 FINAL | 1 | Red Snapper-Gray Trigger Benchmark | | | | Gulf Data Limited Benchmark | | | | CFMC Data Limited Benchmark | Dusky Update | | Goliath Bench | SA gT | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Red Grouper Std | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2017 FINAL | 1 | ATL-East GOM Blueline Tilefish | | | | | | Gr. Amberjack Update | Gag Update | Spiny lobster -PR & Life Hist WS | | | Sandbar Shark STD | BlkGrpr Bench | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Black Seabass Std | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | MRIP Revise ¹ | Vermilion Std | Red Snapper Update | Gray Snapper Benchmark | MRIP Revise ² | Red Snapper Update | | | |
| | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2018 FINAL | 1 | Scamp Research Track ³ | Atlantic Cobia Res Track | | | Scamp Research Track ³ | | Red Snapper Update | Gray Trigger Std | Queen Trig PR-StX | GOM Blacktip Std | | Yellowtail snapper Bench | King Mack Bench | | Gulf Menhaden Review | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Gr. Amberjack Std | | Red Porgy Std | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Snowy Grouper Std | Spanish Mackerel Std | Atl Blacktip Bench | | | | Shark-Stock ID |
| | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2019 | 1 | | | | | | | Request: Vermilion, Cobia, Spanish, Yellowedge Grouper, Tilefish, Red Drum, Lane Snapper, Spiny Lobster | | Request: Lane@PR, Queen Snapper@PR, Redtail Parrot@STX, Yellowtail Snapper@STX | | | | | | ATL Menhaden Review | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Snowy Grouper Std | Spanish Mackerel Std | | | | | |
| | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Gag Std | | | | | | |
| 2020 | 1 | S/RT-OA | | Request: Red Snapper, Tilefish, Red Grouper | | S/RT-OA | | Request: Data Poor ⁴ , Red Snapper, Gag, Greater Amberjack, Snowy Grouper, Speckled Hind | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Cobia-OA | | | | | |
| | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2021+ | White Grunt, Gray Triggerfish | | | | | Gray Triggerfish, Yellowmouth Grouper, Yellowtail Snapper, Vermilion Snapper, Mutton Snapper, Black Grouper, Spiny Lobster, Gray Snapper, Goliath Grouper | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1. South Atlantic MRIP Revision stocks: Red Snapper, Red Grouper, Blueline Tilefish, Black Sea Bass 2. Gulf of Mexico MRIP Revision stocks: Greater Amberjack, Gag, Vermilion Snapper, Spanish Mackerel 3. Scamp Research Track includes Gulf and South Altantic. Yellowmouth grouper will also be evaluated due to species identification concerns. 4. Gulf Data Poor II: Queen, Blackfin, Cubera, and Silk Snapper; Warsaw and Yellowfin Grouper; Banded Rudderfish | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 9/22/2016 | | | | | | | |

MEETING BRIEFING INFORMATION

Introduction

1.1. Documents

Agenda

Attachment 1. May 2016 Meeting Summary

1.2. Action

Introductions

Review and Approve Agenda

Approve May 2016 Meeting Summary

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Modified the agenda to accommodate participation by Dr. Barbieri over webinar.
- Approved the May 2016 meeting summary.

1. Assessment Project Status Reports

1.1. Documents

Attachment 2. Projects Report September 2016

Attachment 3. 2016 & 2017 Project Schedules

1.2. Summary

The Projects Report (Attachment 2) provides a narrative of SEDAR activities that are underway. Included is a memo from Luiz Barbieri, FL FWCC, addressing timing of the black grouper assessment. Details of scheduled activities and key deadlines are contained in the 2016 and 2017 project schedule overviews (Attachment 3).

1.3. ACTION

- Approve FL FWCC request to reschedule the black grouper benchmark for completion in December 2017

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Approved the FL FWCC request and SEDAR involvement in black grouper.
- Provided guidance on addressing blueline tilefish ongoing stock ID issues.

2. Research Track Process

2.1. Documents

Attachment 4. Research Track Process Proposal

Attachment 5. Research Track Summary Presentation

2.2. Overview

SEFSC staff have presented and discussed the proposed SEDAR Research Track benchmark approach with the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils and SSCs. The proposal document provides details on the process and the presentation provides an overview. The first pilot application of the research track approach is planned for the Gulf of Mexico-South Atlantic scamp assessment beginning in 2018.

At this meeting, the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils are asked to brief the Steering Committee on their Council's reviews and comments, and the Steering Committee is asked to provide guidance on how the process will be applied to the scamp assessment.

2.1. **Action**

- Provide guidance on the research track approach for the 2018 scamp assessment.

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Approved the research track for scamp in 2018.
- Approved use of the research track for other upcoming benchmarks including cobia and possibly Gulf of Mexico Gray Snapper.
- Directed SEDAR staff to prepare SOPPs revisions while the research tracks are underway to expedite formal approval.

3. State-Sponsored Assessment Process: Goliath Benchmark Case Study

3.1. **Documents**

Attachment 6. SEDAR 47 Goliath Grouper Assessment Report

3.2. **Summary**

While the majority of SEDAR projects are devoted to assessments conducted by the SEFSC, assessments prepared through other entities, such as the Gulf and Atlantic States Commissions as well as the FL FWCC, have also been included since the beginning. The level of SEDAR staff involvement in these projects, and overall adherence to SEDAR practices for assessment development, has varied over time. Early projects such as SEDAR 3, yellowtail snapper, were organized by SEDAR staff and closely tracked the SEDAR process. More recently, the role of SEDAR staff has decreased, with assessments prepared according to the practices and policies of the lead analytical group and SEDAR becoming involved primarily as a provider of a peer review. This approach improves productivity and provides maximum flexibility to those preparing assessments. However, as SEDAR staff becomes less involved, and SEDAR practices related to the data and assessment processes become less a factor, concerns may arise with the adequacy of the information provided for peer review. In particular, reviewers and end users may come to associate a certain level of transparency and rigor in the development efforts for assessments offered for SEDAR review. Diminishment of those standards could reflect poorly on the process as a whole.

A benchmark assessment of Goliath Grouper was recently completed as SEDAR 47. Key events are summarized in the table below. The assessment was developed by the FL FWCC and provided for SEDAR to review, with the review panel ultimately finding the assessment inadequate for supporting status inferences. While data limitations were the primary justification of this finding, the reviewers noted a lack of detail in the assessment report and raised procedural concerns with the data and assessment stages that warrant consideration by the Steering Committee. For example, regarding the adequacy of the assessment data, the review panel commented “There was no data workshop so this was difficult to evaluate; the analysts provided some detail, but the RP concluded that there are numerous issues with the data and its treatments, which are outlined below. The RP felt that this assessment could have benefitted from a data workshop (or webinars) to discuss important issues related to the data.” This was echoed in one of the individual reviewer reports, stated as “The assessment process may benefit from wider discussion with other experts as the data and assessments are being undertaken to get a broader perspective from a range of expertise that may enhance modelling choices and the use of data.” These comments suggest that future assessment projects may benefit from a more robust and inclusive approach at the data and assessment stages. Benchmark projects in particular convey expectations regarding assessment development that should be upheld to the extent possible.

SEDAR 47 Southeastern U.S. Goliath Grouper Timeline

| Date | Event |
|--------------------|--|
| October 2014 | Goliath Grouper added to the schedule at the SEDAR Steering Committee |
| July 2015 | SEDAR 47 Review Workshop Schedule approved by Cooperators |
| September 11, 2015 | Data Deadline |
| October 2015 | SEDAR 47 Review Workshop Terms of Reference approved by Cooperators |
| February 19, 2016 | SEDAR informed of a FWC “Data/Assessment Workshop” to be conducted |
| March 14-16, 2016 | FWC ran a non-SEDAR Data/Assessment Workshop |
| April 29, 2016 | Assessment Report delivered to the Review Panel |
| May 17-19, 2016 | Review Workshop |
| May 17, 2016 | Only one working paper was provided for this project. No reference documents were received for this process. |

After reviewing the reviewer recommendations from SEDAR 47 and considering past assessment experiences, SEDAR staff suggests that a proposal be provided for future state-sponsored assessments that documents the approach to be used in developing the assessment for peer review and the role of Cooperators and SEDAR staff in the process. The proposal should be reviewed by the Steering Committee prior to the project being

approved for the SEDAR schedule, and, if desired, could also be reviewed by the Cooperators who will bear ultimate responsibility for developing fishing level recommendations and management actions based on the outcome. General topics to be addressed in the proposal are listed below. The Steering Committee is asked to consider if additional information is desired or if specific process requirements should be imposed.

Topics to consider for the assessment proposals:

- 1) Analytical agency and Personnel
 - Agency that will conduct the assessment
 - Project Coordinator and administrative contact
 - Lead analyst or team members
 - TOR and schedule approval
- 2) Data review and evaluation
 - Review approach
 - Desired SEDAR, NMFS, and Cooperator support
- 3) Assessment development
 - Assessment process
 - Desired SEDAR, NMFS, and Cooperator support
- 4) Peer Review
 - Type of Review
 - Desired SEDAR, NMFS, and Cooperator support
- 5) Distribution and Presentation to Cooperators

3.3. **Action**

- Provide guidance on the process used to develop state-sponsored assessments and the role of SEDAR and Cooperators in such assessments in the future.

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Approved requesting assessment proposals with contents as suggested.

4. Assessment Schedule

4.1. **Documents**

- Attachment 7. SEDAR Project List
- Attachment 8. GMFMC Requests
- Attachment 9. SAFMC Requests
- Attachment 10. ABTA request

4.2. **Summary**

The Committee is asked to finalize assessment projects for 2018 and identify priorities for 2019 to 2022. Identifying long term priorities is necessary for coordinating SEDAR research needs with grant programs such as CRP and MARFIN. With competitive grant programs such as these, it may take as much as 5 years between a research need being

included in an RFP and a complete project being available for consideration in a SEDAR workshop.

Past SEDAR assessment projects are provided in Attachment 7. Individual Cooperator priorities and requests are provided in Attachment 8 for the GMFMC and Attachment 9 for the SAFMC. SEDAR received a letter from the Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Association regarding consideration of a Dolphin assessment, provided as Attachment 10.

The quarterly planning worksheet is included as Appendix 1.

Schedule Topic Highlights

1. GMFMC Requests – Attachment 8
 - 1.1 Gray Triggerfish rather than Gray Snapper in 2017
 - 1.2 2018-2021 priorities
 - 1.3 Updated King Mackerel projections
2. SAFMC Requests – Attachment 9
 - 2.1 SAFMC priorities 2018-2020
 - 2.2 Black Sea Bass Standard, 2017
 - 2.3 Blueline Tilefish revised timing
3. FL FWC Requests
 - 3.1 Black Grouper benchmark to begin in 2017
4. Other Cooperator Requests
5. Additional Requests
 - 5.1 American Bluefin Tuna Association letter: Dolphin

Future Procedural Workshops

The Steering Committee asked for feedback from the SEDAR Data Best Practice Standing Panel on the next Procedural Workshop topic. Addressing reproductive inputs and their role in reference points was suggested by the Steering Committee at the prior meeting. The Panel recommended holding a workshop on reference points which would include the topic of reproductive inputs, and noted other efforts to discuss reproductive measures and inputs nationally, including meetings planned for later in 2016 and 2017. In addition, some of the SSC's have recently discussed reference point selection. The proposed workshop could build on these efforts. The Standing Panel also identified natural mortality as a potential Procedural Workshop topic due in part to the new Then et al. 2014 estimation methods. The Panel noted the natural mortality issue was time sensitive since natural mortality estimation methods could potentially affect all assessments, but noted this topic could potentially be addressed outside of SEDAR, perhaps through joint SSC discussions. Other potential Procedural Workshop topics that have been discussed include: Assessment Best Practices, Discard Mortality, and a second Stock ID & Meristics workshop focusing on shark species in 2018. Given the wide range of

topics considered, and the overlap of this topic with the stock ID and the best practices groups, staff developed summary recommendations for Committee consideration .

Staff Recommendations

2018: Shark Stock ID

2019: Reference Points – estimation and influences

2020: Stock ID & Meristics II (2017 workshop addresses stocks scheduled through 2020)

2021: Assessment Best Practices (should follow the research track pilot)

Other Topics: Discard mortality, Natural Mortality

4.3. **Action**

- Finalize the 2018 assessment schedule
- Address Cooperator requests
- Provide guidance on future procedural workshops

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Approved project priorities for 2017 and beyond.
- Specific projects are shown in Table A and preferred timing is shown in Table B, provided with the meeting summary at the start of this report.

Table 1. Preliminary Assessment Project Schedule and Details Overview, as considered by the Steering Committee during this meeting.

| Start Year | SEDAR # | SPECIES & JURISDICTION | Assessment Track | Terminal Year of Data | Available to Cooperator |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2016 | 49 | GMFMC Data-limited species | Benchmark | 2014 | December 2016 |
| | 50 | SAFMC / MAFMC/GMFMC blueline tilefish | Benchmark | TBD | TBD |
| | U | SAFMC tilefish | Update | 2014 | April 2016 |
| | U | HMS dusky shark | Update | 2015 | July 2016 |
| | U | GMFMC gag grouper | Update | 2015 | January 2017 |
| | 53 | SAFMC red grouper | Standard | 2015 | February 2017 |
| | U | GMFMC greater amberjack | Update | 2015 | February 2017 |
| 2017 | 51 | GMFMC gray snapper | Benchmark | 2015 | April 2018 |
| | 48 | FL FWC black grouper | Benchmark | 2015 | April 2017 |
| | 52 | GMFMC red snapper | Standard | 2016 | March 2018 |
| | U | SAFMC vermilion snapper | Update | 2016 | April 2018 |
| | U | HMS Gulf of Mexico blacktip shark | Update | 2016 | April 2018 |
| | R | SAFMC MRIP Catch Revisions | | 2016 | TBD |
| | R | GMFMC MRIP Catch Revisions | | 2016 | TBD |
| | 54 | HMS sandbar shark | Standard | 2015 | January 2018 |
| Future Priorities (tentative) | | | | | |
| 2018 | | HMS Atlantic blacktip shark | Benchmark | | |
| | | SAFMC / GMFMC scamp | Benchmark | | |
| | | FL FWC yellowtail snapper | Benchmark | | |

SEDAR Methods and Procedures Workshops

| Number | Year | Topic |
|--------|------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | 2008 | Indices Development and Evaluation |
| 2 | 2008 | Evaluating and Modeling Catchability |
| 3 | 2009 | Caribbean Data Review |
| 4 | 2010 | Evaluating Assessment Uncertainty |
| 5 | 2012 | GOM Episodic Events Workshop |
| 6 | 2014 | South Atlantic Shrimp Data Evaluation |
| 7 | 2015 | Best Practices, Data |
| 8 | 2017 | Stock ID and Meristics Workshop |

5. Data Best Practices Update

5.1. Documents

Attachment 11. Data Best Practices Panel TORs and Approach

5.2. Summary

The SEDAR Data Best Practices workshop was held June 22-26, 2015 in Atlanta, GA. Participants developed and documented many Best Practices that are being applied in current assessment projects.

The SEDAR Data Best Practice Panel met via webinar in June, July, and September 2016. The Panel continued work on their Terms of Reference and Approach document, incorporating the feedback received from the Steering Committee. The Panel's finalized ToR and Approach document is offered for review and consideration by the Steering Committee.

The Panel has also been working to develop a Data Best Practice Living Document which will house all of the Data Best Practices recommendations and will be updated, as necessary, into the future. The original Procedural Workshop 7: Data Best Practices report contained some information specific to the workshop itself. The Living Document will contain all of the recommendations from the original report with a brief introduction highlighting the role of the Standing Panel and the process for modifying existing or creating new Best Practice recommendations. The original report will remain available on the SEDAR Procedural Workshop 7 web page.

The Panel has also been working to develop a Data Issue Inventory that will be a running list of the identified SEDAR data issues. The current draft Data Issue Inventory contains issues identified during the SEDAR Procedural Workshop 7 workshop process. The Inventory will be updated in the future as new issues are identified.

Additionally, a new SEDAR Data Best Practices webpage has been added to the SEDAR website (<http://sedarweb.org/sedar-data-best-practices>). Meeting summaries from the Standing Panel are currently available on the website and the Data Best Practices Living Document and Data Issue Inventory will be posted to the webpage once complete. SEDAR staff will continue to build out the webpage this fall as these additional documents are finalized.

5.3. Action

- Review and provide feedback on the Data Best Practice ToR & Approach document.

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Supported the Data Best Practices plan as provided.

6. Stock ID and Meristics Progress Report

6.1. Documents

Attachment 12. Stock ID & Meristics Workshop Overview

6.2. Summary

Planning is underway for the Stock ID & Meristics Procedural Workshop. The primary goal of the workshop is to develop biological stock structure recommendations and meristic conversion equations for species that have been or will be assessed through the SEDAR process to help streamline such decisions for future assessments. The Organizing Committee

(OC) met via webinar in July and August 2016 to begin developing Terms of Reference, identifying species to include in the workshop, and to discuss workshop location and timing.

The OC recommends the workshop be held in Atlanta, GA in late 2017 (exact dates TBD). Terms of Reference are offered for the Steering Committee's consideration in Attachment 12. The OC recommends the following species be included in the 2017 Stock ID & Meristics workshop: **cobia, scamp, gag, white grunt, yellowmouth grouper, and gray triggerfish**. Criteria used to prioritize species included: schedule/timing of next assessment – with benchmark assessments receiving highest priority; recommendations/findings on Stock ID from previous SEDAR SAR's (e.g. were there studies with conflicting results, did the stock ID issues appear to be settled with data available, etc.); and workload (e.g. how many species could realistically be handled at a workshop). See Table 2 below and Attachment 12 for additional details. The OC thought it may be possible to handle one additional species during the workshop and would like to get feedback from the Steering Committee on their next priority species based on their future assessment priorities.

In addition to providing feedback on the Terms of Reference and species selection recommendations, the OC is interested in getting guidance from the Steering Committee on the following topics:

- **How to handle when biological and/or assessment unit stock recommendations do not match existing management units:** The OC included a ToR (#1d) to identify and discuss when recommendations on biological stock structure, assessment stock unit, and the existing management unit do not align. When mismatches are identified, it is currently unclear who makes the final decision on how this should be handled for the assessment and for management actions which may follow.
- **Stock ID workshop recommendations and their potential impact on SEDAR assessment planning:** How will the recommendations from Stock ID & Meristics workshops affect future SEDAR scheduling? For example, if a species is scheduled for an update or standard assessment and Stock ID workshop findings recommend a change in stock structure, does that automatically trigger the next assessment for that species to be a benchmark, or can such changes be handled through the standard process in some cases? Stock ID recommendations can also potentially affect workload. For example, if Stock ID findings recommend a multi-region assessment (e.g. South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico combined) that could potentially impact the workload of data and assessment personnel in both regions which could impact schedule planning.

Table 2. SEDAR Stock ID & Meristic Workshop Organizing Committee's recommendations for species to include in the 2017 workshop.

| Species | Justification |
|---------------------|---|
| Cobia | SEDAR Steering Committee priority; South Atlantic benchmark on schedule for 2018; potentially complex Stock ID issues (includes inshore/offshore component), new studies since last assessment |
| Scamp | SEDAR Steering Committee priority; South Atlantic & Gulf of Mexico benchmark on schedule for 2018; first time assessment |
| Yellowmouth Grouper | SEDAR 49 (GoM Data Limited) yellowmouth grouper assessment halted due to species ID issues between yellowmouth grouper and scamp, recommend assessing scamp and yellowmouth grouper at same time to further discuss species ID issues; South Atlantic & Gulf of Mexico scamp benchmark on schedule for 2018 |
| White Grunt | SAFMC requested white grunt benchmark assessment in 2020; first time assessment; may be complex stock structure - genetics and growth differences seen between Carolinas and South Florida |
| Gag | In past assessments, previous guidance from Councils to use mgmt. boundaries; documentation from past assessments note conflicting data in regards to Stock ID |
| Gray Triggerfish | GMFMC request benchmark in 2018; SAFMC request benchmark in 2020; little documentation on stock ID in some past SAR's; some documentation suggests biological stock may not match existing mgmt. or assessment unit stocks |

6.3. **Action**

- Review and provide feedback on Terms of Reference, species recommendations, and workshop timing for the Stock ID & Meristics workshop.
- Provide guidance on how to address situations where biological stock structure and/or assessment unit recommendations do not align with existing management units.
- Provide guidance on Stock ID recommendations impact on SEDAR assessment planning.

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Approved the TORs, with the changes as shown in the meeting recommendations at the start of this report.

- Provided guidance addressing mismatch between biological and management units. Details are in the meeting summary found at the beginning of this report.
- Addressed stock ID for upcoming projects.

7. NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Prioritization Update

7.1. Documents

Attachment 13. NMFS Stock Assessment Prioritization

Attachment 14A. SAFMC Example Prioritization Scoring

Attachment 15B. SAFMC Prioritization Details Spreadsheet

7.2. Summary

NOAA Fisheries developed a tool to help Councils and the agency prioritize assessments. It was presented to the SSCs and Councils during Fall and Winter 2015. The tool is designed to be applied at the Council level, with Council's around the country at various stages of development. The SAFMC SSC considered example scoring of prioritization criteria, and intends to consider those criteria requiring expert judgement in detail, working cooperatively with AP representatives, at its next meeting in October 2016. The current scoring approach is provided as an example. Attachment 14A is the summary table showing the scoring for each species, and attachment 14B is the spreadsheet providing details on how the values were derived.

Each Council is asked to report to the Steering Committee on its progress in reviewing and applying the prioritization tool. The Committee is asked to consider how the prioritization process can be used in SEDAR project planning.

7.3. Action

- Provide guidance on how the prioritization process can be used in SEDAR project planning.

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Received an update on progress by the Cooperators.

Other Business

Task Review and Next Meeting

Based on past practices, the next meeting will be held via webinar in May 2017.

MEETING OUTCOME:

- Agreed to hold the next meeting in Spring 2017 via webinar.

Adjourn

Appendix 1. Workload Planning Worksheet, 2016-2019, for consideration during this meeting.

| YEAR | Quarter | South Atlantic Team | | | | Gulf/Caribbean | | | | | HMS | | FL FWCC | Extra | SEDAR |
|------|---------|---------------------|--------------|------|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------|-------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | WS |
| 2016 | 1 | RS/GT | RS/GT | | | GDL | GDL | | | CDL | | | GG | SA gT | |
| | 2 | RS/GT | RS/GT | | | GDL | GDL | | | CDL | DS | | GG | SA gT | |
| | 3 | BL | BL | | <i>RG</i> | GDL | GDL | | | | DS | | | | |
| | 4 | BL | BL | | <i>RG</i> | GDL | GDL | GAJ | GAG | | | | | | |
| 2017 | 1 | BL | BL | | <i>RG</i> | GDL | GDL | GS | | | | | BLG | | |
| | 2 | BL | BL | | | | | GS | | | | <i>SBS</i> | BLG | | SID |
| | 3 | BL | BL | MRIP | | | | GS | MRIP | | | <i>SBS</i> | BLG | | SID |
| | 4 | | | MRIP | VS | | <i>RS</i> | GS | MRIP | <i>RS</i> | GBt | <i>SBS</i> | BLG | | |
| 2018 | 1 | S/RT | | MRIP | VS | S/RT | <i>RS</i> | GS | MRIP | <i>RS</i> | GBt | | YTS | | |
| | 2 | S/RT | | MRIP | | S/RT | | | MRIP | | | | YTS | | |
| | 3 | S/RT | | | | S/RT | | | | | | | YTS | | |
| | 4 | S/RT | | | | S/RT | | | | | ABt | | YTS | | |
| 2019 | 1 | S/RT | | | | S/RT | | | | | ABt | | | | |
| | 2 | S/RT | | | | S/RT | | | | | ABt | | | | |
| | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

BENCHMARK

Benchmarks are in Bold. Project number listed where know, otherwise species listed. These require 5 quarters, 4 for the SEDAR process and 1 for SSC reporting and projections

Standard

Standard Projects in Italics. These require 2 quarters.

Update

Update Projects in plain font. These require 1 quarter.

Codes

| | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| gT | golden Tilefish | BL | Blueline Tilefish | RS | Red Snapper |
| S/RT | Scamp, Research Track Pilot | RG | Red Grouper | GAG | Gag Grouper |
| DS | HMS Dusky Shark | VS | Vermilion Snapper | SBS | Sandbar shark |
| GBt | Gulf Blacktip Shark | GAJ | Greater Amberjack | YTS | Yellowtail Snapper |
| RSGT | Red Snapper, Gray Triggerfish | ABt | Atlantic Blacktip Shark | GDL | Gulf Data Limited |
| BLG | Black Grouper (review only) | ABP | Best Practices, Assessments | GS | Gray Snapper, start time TBD |
| MRIP | Revision Updates for MRIP Data | GG | Goliath Grouper (review only) | SID | Stock ID and Meristics |
| CDL | Caribbean Data Limited | | | | |

SEDAR Steering Committee

Projects Report

May 2017

Completed Projects, September 2016 –April 2017.

4 projects assessing 11 stocks (includes 8 data limited, of which 1 was accepted as adequate for management advice)

SEDAR 49 Gulf of Mexico Data-limited Species, Benchmark of 8 stocks

Species to consider: Red Drum, Lane Snapper, Wenchman, Yellowmouth Grouper, Speckled Hind, Snowy Grouper, Almaco Jack, Lesser Amberjack

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Summary: A data scoping call was held in March 2016, and a Data Webinar was held in April 2016. The Data Workshop was held 2-6 May 2016 in New Orleans. Assessment webinars were held June through September 2016, and the Review Workshop was held November 1-3, 2016 in Miami. The SAR was disseminated on 6 December 2017. The Gulf Council SSC reviewed the assessment results at their March 2017 meeting and determined the assessment for Lane Snapper provided information appropriate for providing management advice. The assessments for three additional species (Wenchman, Almaco jack, and lesser amberjack) were determined to require further development before being useful for management. The remaining species (red drum, Yellowmouth grouper, speckled hind, and snowy grouper) were not able to be fully evaluated due to data issues and limitations.

SEDAR 53 South Atlantic Red Grouper, Standard

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Summary: The South Atlantic Red Grouper Assessment was changed to a Standard in order to consider inclusion of the SERFS video index. A Data Scoping webinar was held in August 2016 and Assessment webinars were held from October 2016 through January 2017. The final Stock Assessment Report was disseminated 22 February 2017. The assessment will be considered by the South Atlantic SSC in April 2017 and recommendations provided to the SAFMC in June 2017.

Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack, Update

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Summary: The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed by the Gulf SSC at their June 2016 meeting. The data deadline is set for 31 August 2016, and the assessment is scheduled to be completed by February 2017. The assessment was completed in March 2017 and reviewed by the Gulf Council SSC at its March meeting.

Gulf of Mexico Gag, Update

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Summary: The Terms of Reference are to be reviewed by the Gulf SSC at their June 2016 meeting. The data deadline was set for 15 July 2016. The assessment was completed December 2016 and the Gulf SSC reviewed it at its January 2017 meeting.

Projects in Progress

5 projects addressing 5 stocks

SEDAR 48 Florida Black Grouper, Benchmark

NOTE: Recommended to stop following the data workshop.

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Summary: A benchmark assessment of Black Grouper was scheduled be prepared during 2017 with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission providing the analytical team. This is a jointly managed stock with the GMFMC so both Councils made appointments and approved the schedule and Terms of Reference. The SAFMC made appointments and provided approvals in December 2016. The Data Workshop was held March 15-17, 2017 in St. Petersburg, FL. A variety of issues were identified during the data stage of this process and the FWC decided to halt the development of the assessment at that point. A Data Workshop report will be prepared, documenting the state of the data through the post-DW webinar. That report, along with a smaller working paper describing the issues, will be provided to both Council SSCs for their review.

SEDAR 50 Atlantic Blueline Tilefish, Benchmark

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Summary: A benchmark assessment has been underway since mid-2016. Significant events to date include a recommendation from the August 2016 Age Workshop that age determinations are not reliable and should not be used in the assessment; and a recommendation from the June 2016 Stock ID workshop that the biological stock extends from the Mid-Atlantic through the Gulf of Mexico. Following discussion of the stock ID recommendation, the SEDAR Steering Committee recommended a joint SSC review of the stock ID findings; this review was held October 28, 2016. The Steering Committee recommended a regional science and management leadership level review of the joint SSC findings to provide TOR guidance, conducted during a conference call on November 14, 2016. The Council-Agency leadership group recommended conducting the SEDAR 50 assessment with a Gulf-South Atlantic stock dividing line at the Gulf-South Atlantic Council boundary. The SAFMC passed a motion in December 2016 to modify the TORs in accordance with this recommendation. The Data Workshop was held January 23-27, 2017, the Assessment Process will be a combination of an in-person workshop on May 23-26, 2017 and a series of webinars held between April and July 2017, and the Review Workshop will be August 29-31, 2017. The assessment will be considered by the South Atlantic SSC in October 2017 and recommendations provided to the Council in December 2017.

SEDAR 51 Gulf of Mexico Gray Snapper, Benchmark

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Summary: The Stock ID Process for gray snapper was conducted via webinars in late 2016. A data scoping call was held in January 2017, and a Data Webinar in February 2017. The Data Workshop will be held 24-28 April 2017 in Tampa, Florida. Assessment webinars will be held June through October 2017, and the Review Workshop is to be held February 13-15, 2018 in Miami.

SEDAR 54 HMS Sandbar Shark, Standard

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Summary: An assessment following a Standard-track approach for HMS Sandbar Shark will be conducted in 2017. The Project Schedule and the Terms of Reference were finalized in December 2016. A data scoping call was held February 2017, and a data webinar was held in March 2017. The deadline for updated data sets was 7 April, and working papers are due 15 May. Assessment webinars will be conducted May-August, and a CIE desk review will be conducted in October 2017. The assessment is scheduled to be completed by December 2017.

SEDAR 56 South Atlantic Black Seabass, Standard

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Summary: A standard assessment was requested to allow consideration of new video data and to reconsider the use of length and age data. The terminal year is 2015 and the assessment will be developed through a series of five webinars held between February and August 2017. The assessment is scheduled to be complete at the end of September 2017, to be considered by the South Atlantic SSC in October 2017 and recommendations provided to the Council in December 2017.

Upcoming Projects – Planning Underway

5 projects addressing 4-5 stocks

SEDAR 52 Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper, Standard

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Summary: The Terms of Reference and Project Schedule for this assessment were approved in April 2017. The Data deadline has been scheduled for August 1, 2017 and an in-person workshop has been scheduled for November 29-December 1, 2017 in Miami, FL. Assessment webinars are scheduled for January and February 2018, and the assessment should be completed March 2018.

South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper, Update

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Summary: A standard assessment was requested to allow consideration of new video index data and to reconsider error distributions for fitting age and length composition data. The terminal year will be 2016 and assessment webinars will be held in late 2017 and early 2018. Preliminary scheduling has the assessment complete in March 2018 which would provide it for SSC consideration in April 2018 and Council consideration in June 2018. The SAFMC will be asked to make appointments for the assessment panel and approve the schedule and TORs at the June 2017 meeting.

Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Scamp, Research Track (1 or 2 stocks)

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Summary: A Research Track assessment is tentatively scheduled to start the first quarter of 2018. Detailed planning for this project has not yet begun. Schedule and Terms of Reference will be developed in the upcoming months and sent to Cooperators in summer/fall 2017 for approval.

Atlantic Cobia, Research Track

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Summary: A Research Track assessment is tentatively scheduled to start the second quarter of 2018. Detailed planning for this project has not yet begun. Schedule and Terms of Reference will be developed in the upcoming months and sent to Cooperators in late summer/fall 2017 for approval.

Postponed Projects

MRIP Revision Assessments

Species: South Atlantic: Red Snapper, Red Grouper, Blueline Tilefish, Black Seabass
Gulf of Mexico: Greater Amberjack, Gag, Vermilion Snapper, Spanish Mackerel

SEDAR Contact: South Atlantic: Julia Byrd; Gulf of Mexico: Julie Neer

Summary: Revision assessments will include an update of the MRIP data, based on calibrations applied to address the effort survey change. No additional changes or data will be considered, and the terminal year of the assessment will not be advanced. Revision assessments were initially scheduled for development in late 2017 for SSC review in April 2018. The MRIP Transition Team recommended delaying assessment revisions until 2018, due to delays in the calibration processes and to include the full 3 years of side by side survey information (2015-2017). Revised data, addressing calibrations for both the effort and access point survey changes, are expected to be available in mid 2018.

HMS Blacktip Shark, Update

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Summary: During the last Steering Committee meeting, it was determined that this assessment would be pushed back until 2018, due to staffing issues and the desire to have the updated MRIP numbers included in the assessment.

Stock ID and Meristics Procedural Workshop

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Summary: Postponed Indefinitely. The Data Best Practices workshop in 2015 recommended a workshop devoted to addressing Stock ID and Meristics issues for upcoming assessments. Initial planning began in 2016 for a workshop and independent peer review in 2017. However, due to budget concerns for 2017, this workshop was cancelled in December 2016. Stock ID for upcoming research track assessments of Gulf of Mexico/South Atlantic Scamp and Atlantic Cobia will be addressed through the Research Track Process.

Given that stock ID has become particularly challenging with recent assessments, and there is considerable confusion regarding how such decisions should be made and for which stocks past decisions should be reconsidered, a general discussion of stock ID determinations, including both the process and the stocks to review, is under consideration for a possible joint meeting of the SAFMC and GMFMC SSCs.

**Summary of SEDAR Project Schedules for 2017 assessments
(13 April 2017)**

SEDAR 48 Southeastern Black Grouper (Benchmark)

Life History Data Deadline: 31 January 2017

Landings Data Deadline: 24 February 2017

DW: March 15-17, 2017 – St. Petersburg, FL

AW: June 27-29, 2017 - St. Petersburg, FL

Assessment webinars: May-September 2017

RW: November 14-16, 2017 – St. Petersburg, FL

Terminal Year of Data: 2015

Report Available to Council: January/February 2018

Coordinator: Julie

SEDAR 50 – SA Blueline Tilefish (Benchmark)

Stock ID Work Group Meeting: June 28-30, 2016

Ageing Workshop: August 29-31, 2016

Life History Data Deadline: 1 November 2016

Landings Data Deadline: 3 January 2017

DW: January 23-27, 2017 – Charleston

AW: May 23-26, 2017 – Beaufort, NC

Assessment webinars: March-July 2017

RW: August 29-31, 2017 – Beaufort, NC

Terminal Year of Data: 2015

Report Available to Council: October 2017

Coordinator: Julia

SEDAR 51 – Gulf of Mexico Gray Snapper (Benchmark)

Gray Snapper Stock ID Webinars – November 2016

Raw Life History and Length Comp Data Deadline: 30 January 2017

Landings Data Deadline: 3 April 2017

DW: April 24-28, 2017 - Tampa

Assessment webinars: June – September 2017

RW: February 14-16, 2018 – Miami, FL

Terminal Year of Data: 2015

Report Available to Council: April 2018

Coordinator: Julie

SEDAR 52 – Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper (Standard)

Data Deadline: 1 August 2017

In-person workshop: November 29- December 1, 2017– Miami, FL

Terminal Year of Data: 2016

Report Available to Council: March 2018

Coordinator: Julie

**Summary of SEDAR Project Schedules for 2017 assessments
(13 April 2017)**

SEDAR 53 – SA Red Grouper (Standard)

Data Deadline: 5 September 2016

Assessment webinars: November 2016 – January 2017

Terminal Year of Data: 2015

Report Available to Council: February 2017

Coordinator: Julia

SEDAR 54 – HMS Sandbar Shark (Standard)

Data Deadline: 7 April 2017

Assessment Webinars: May-August 2017

Terminal Year of Data: 2015

Report Available to Cooperator: January 2018

Coordinator: Julie

SEDAR 55 – SA Vermilion Snapper (Standard)

Data Deadlines: 30 June 2017 (landings); 18 September 2017 (other data sets)

Assessment webinars: August 2017 – February 2018 (preliminary)

Terminal Year of Data: 2016

Report Available to Council: April 2018

Coordinator: Julia

SEDAR 56 – SA Black Sea Bass (Standard)

Data Deadline: 1 January 2017 (landings); 31 March 2017 (other data sets)

Assessment Webinars: February – August 2017

Terminal Year of Data: 2015

Report Available to Cooperator: October 2017

Coordinator: Julia

SEDAR 57 – Caribbean Spiny Lobster (Standard) ?

Data Deadline: ???

In-person workshop: ? – Puerto Rico

Assessment Webinars: ?

Terminal Year of Data: 2016

Report Available to Cooperator: January 2018

Coordinator: Julie

Other Assessments/data needs scheduled for 2017:

MRIP Catch Revisions – South Atlantic:

Species: Red snapper, red grouper, blueline tilefish, black seabass

**Summary of SEDAR Project Schedules for 2017 assessments
(13 April 2017)**

Terminal Year of Data: 2016

MRIP Catch Revisions – Gulf of Mexico:

Species: Greater amberjack, gag, vermilion snapper, Spanish mackerel

Terminal Year of Data: 2016

Data Deadlines Summary Table (arranged in chronological order by data deadline)

| SEDAR Project | Data Deadline | Assessment Approach |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| SEDAR 56 – SA Black Seabass | 1 January 2017 (Landings) | Standard |
| SEDAR 50 – Atlantic blueline tilefish | 3 January 2017 (Landings) | Benchmark |
| SEDAR 51 – GoM gray snapper | 30 January 2017 (Raw Life History and Length Comps) | Benchmark |
| SEDAR 48 – SE U.S. black grouper | 31 January 2017 (Raw Life History and Length Comps) | Benchmark |
| SEDAR 48 – SE U.S. black grouper | 24 February 2017 (Landings) | Benchmark |
| SEDAR 56 – SA Black Seabass | 31 March 2017 (all other data sets) | Standard |
| SEDAR 51 – GoM gray snapper | 3 April 2017 (Landings) | Benchmark |
| SEDAR 54 – HMS sandbar shark | 7 April 2017 | Standard |
| SEDAR 55 - SA vermilion snapper | 30 June 2017 (Landings) | Standard |
| SEDAR 52 – GoM red snapper | 1 August 2017 | Standard |
| SEDAR 55 - SA vermilion snapper | 18 September 2017 (All other data sets) | Standard |

2017**SEDAR Master Project Schedule****January**

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| 31 | | | | | | |

Designed by Anny, www.annystudio.com

SEDAR 48 – SE Black Grouper

SEDAR 50 – SA Blueline Tilefish

SEDAR 51 – GoM Gray Snapper

SEDAR 52 – GoM Red Snapper (Standard)

SEDAR 54 – HMS Sandbar Shark (Standard)

SEDAR 55 – SA Vermilion Snapper (Standard)

SEDAR 56 – SA Black Sea Bass (Standard)

SEDAR 57 – Caribbean Spiny Lobster (PR) (STD)

SA and GoM MRIP Catch Revisions

Council Meetings

Federal Holidays

(Current as of 13 April 2017)



**Florida Fish
and Wildlife
Conservation
Commission**

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Tallahassee

Aliese P. "Liesa" Priddy
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Gil McRae**
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33701-5020
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Fax: (727) 823-0166
Hearing/speech-impaired:
(800) 955-8771 (T)
(800) 955-8770 (V)
MyFWC.com/Research

April 10, 2017

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Chair, SEDAR Steering Committee
Director, Southeast Fisheries Science Center
National Marine Fisheries Service
75 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149

Dear Dr. Ponwith,

I'm writing to request termination of the SEDAR 48 South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Black Grouper benchmark stock assessment project. The reason for this request has to do with problems with Black Grouper fisheries data.

About 3-4 weeks ago I received phone calls from Dr. Shannon Cass-Calay and Dr. Steve Turner with the SEFSC to discuss what they perceived as species identification issues and other problems with Black Grouper landings data. Drs. Cass-Calay's and Turner's comments were very much in line with similar concerns brought to my attention by FWC-FWRI staff involved in the SEDAR 48 project.

Although problems with Black Grouper fisheries data are not a new development—high uncertainty re. the level of landings associated with misidentification of gag grouper were brought up by the SEDAR 19 Review Panel—the issues recently identified raise additional concerns and calls into question their reliability for stock assessment purposes.

FWC-FWRI staff are working with SEFSC and other partners to complete the SEDAR 48 Data Workshop report and generate a working paper to document the severity and extent of the data problems identified. We'll provide these documents to the SEDAR program as soon as they are completed.

Thanks for considering this request and please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Luiz R. Barbieri".

Luiz R. Barbieri, Ph.D.
Program Administrator
Marine Fisheries Research

cc: John Carmichael
Gil McRae
Jessica McCawley
Dustin Addis
Steve Turner
Shannon Cass-Calay

SEDAR stock assessment categories

Operational Stock Assessment

The operational stock assessment category provides management advice quickly and efficiently using previously approved methods and data sources.

- Builds upon approaches developed in previous benchmark and supports incremental improvements.
- Throughput is maximized through a quick and efficient process with few or no public meetings, saving considerable staff time.
- The most recent data available are processed one time based on specifications that are determined in advance (rather than multiple times as is often the case with the current system), saving considerable staff time
- Concise documentation for consistent, standardized public presentation of results.
- Reviews are completed by the Council SSC's (as with current SEDAR update and standard assessments)
- Allows for reasonable flexibility in the model and data to accommodate specific concerns reflected in the Terms of Reference (e.g., previously vetted model approaches and data sets that might be new to the particular stock, or other changes that the SSC feels competent to review).

Steps in the process:

1. Assimilate data necessary for the modeling framework, including the most recently available data. A public meeting (workshop or webinars) should only be required if there is a need to vet the addition of a data stream that is new for the particular stock. (Action: Data Providers)
2. Incorporate data, run the model, and summarize results in a streamlined report. A public meeting (workshop or webinars) should only be required if there is a need to vet changes in the assessment methods previously reviewed and accepted for this particular stock. A change to new software could be considered provided it makes essentially the same calculations and has been reviewed and applied previously to other SEDAR stocks. (Action: Assessment modelers)
3. Review model results. (Action: SSC and Assessment leads)

Expected timeline: 3-6 months

Expected Products: Concise report with an executive summary.

Research Stock Assessment

The research stock assessment category places the emphasis on developing a highly credible stock assessment framework. It should be applied in cases where a new model, hypothesis, or question needs to be answered about a stock/population. It is not intended to provide management advice, but rather set the stage (prototype approach) for operational modeling.

- Serves to answer questions, test hypotheses, or otherwise explore new ideas for assessing a stock or stocks. Establishes scientific credibility of new data types or analysis methods.
- Does not necessarily need to focus on an individual species, such that results might generalize to multiple operational stock assessments.
- Allows for complete flexibility in data and model choice.
- The process should be expected to last up to a year (or more) and involve a series of public meetings. Includes:
 - thorough documentation of new data/methods/performance
 - extensive investigation of model performance
- A hard deadline should be avoided because the necessary steps to achieve a consensus model are too difficult to anticipate. A deadline may hinder options not previously envisioned.
- Reviews should be completed by a panel of independent experts, with the Council SSC's, ultimately providing recommendations for further improvements. Review should be commensurate with the degree of novelty and controversy.

Steps in the process:

1. Schedule the species to be addressed well in advance (2-3 years prior to anticipated completion) so that all relevant data can be processed, analyzed, and finalized for use in the process. Unfortunately much of our data collection involves archiving samples for later analysis. Thus, archived samples for genetics, reproductive measures, and age determination require a fair amount of lead time to complete. Determine stock boundaries as needed. (Action: Data Providers begin data preparations)
2. Hold workshop(s) to assimilate all available data for the species of interest, but not necessarily the most recent data (14 months prior to anticipated completion). Public meetings to be held and input from fishermen will be valuable in understanding the data and its potential uses. Document the proceedings and decisions, particularly where recommendations depart from previously established best practices. (Action: Participants complete assessment report)

3. Data explorations will guide the structure and type of modeling to be built. Build a modeling framework to answer the question/hypothesis. Consider multiple models. Document the final modeling framework being proposed. (Action: Participants complete assessment report)
4. Review modeling framework proposal. Receive recommendations for operational model framework. (Action: CIE and SSC Review and comment on assessment, complete a review report)

Expected timeline: 9-14 months from data workshop completion, but could be longer depending on the hypothesis or question. For example, a question that requires new data collection to answer might require a longer time frame.

Expected Products: Data workshop report, Assessment workshop report, Review report, and an approved/accepted model for use in future operational assessments.

Figure 1. Hypothetical example of two year cycle of the research and operational assessment tracks for five analysts. After two years the results would include 3 research track assessments completed and 10 operational assessments providing management advice. Long term averages for a staff of 5 analysts would work out to 1-2 research track assessments per year and 4-6 operational assessments per year, depending on how many research tracks are chosen in a year.

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------------|---------|-----|-----|---------|----------|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|---------|----------|---------|-----|---------|-----|-----|---------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Research Track Assessment | Stock 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | Stock 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Research Track Assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stock 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | | | | | | Stock 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | | | | Stock 5 | | | | | | | Stock 6 | | | | | | | Stock 1 | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | Stock 7 | | | | | | Stock 8 | | | | | | | | Stock 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | | | | | Stock 10 | | | | | | | Stock 11 | | | | | | | | Stock 12 | | | | |



NOAA
FISHERIES
SEFSC

Erik H. Williams

Beaufort, NC Laboratory

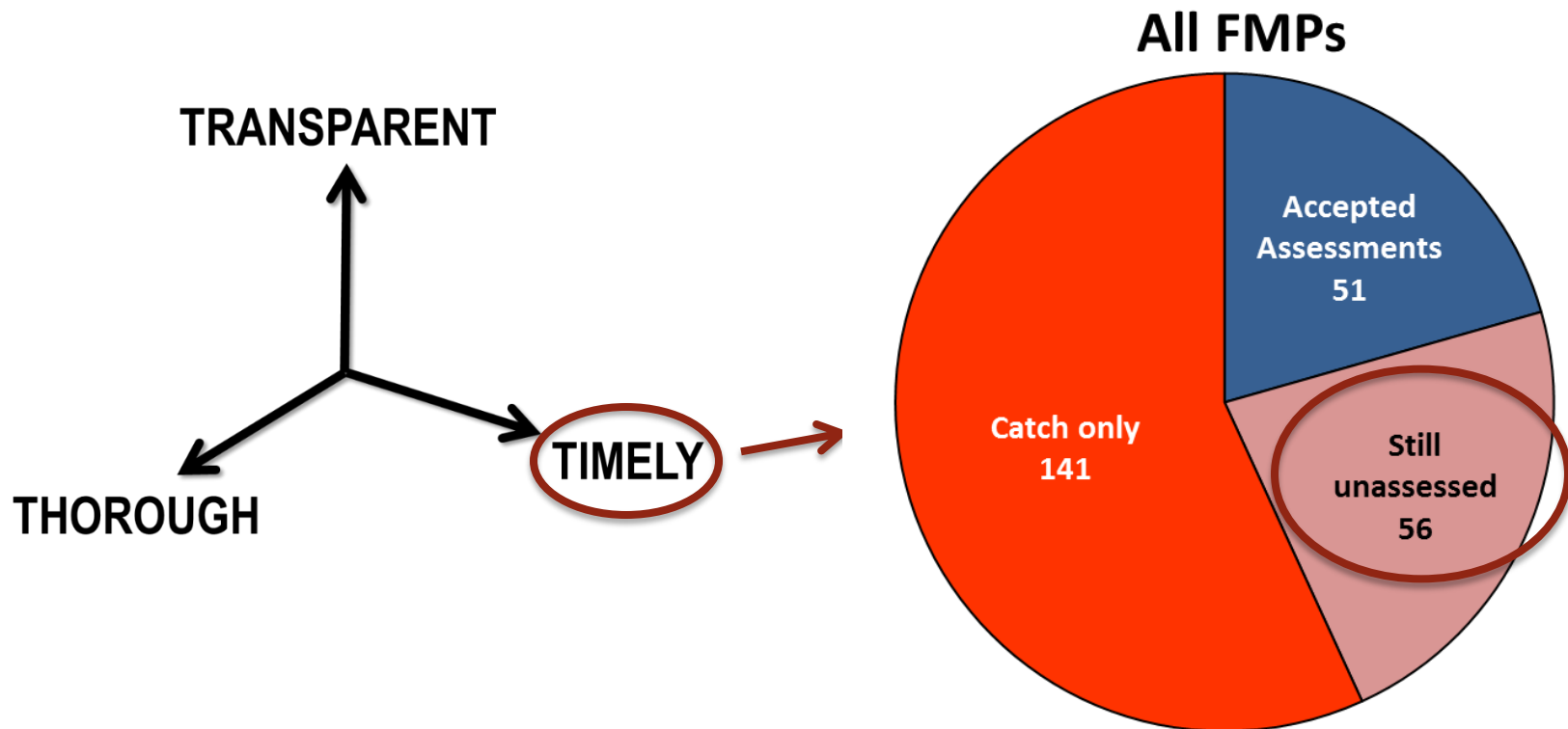
SEDAR Stock Assessments:

Transitioning from
Benchmarks/Updates
to
Research/Operational



The problem: Balancing the three T's

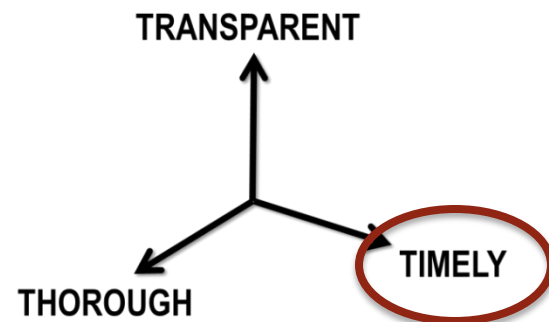
Existing combination of benchmark, standard and update assessments is very transparent, reasonably thorough, but too slow for the demand



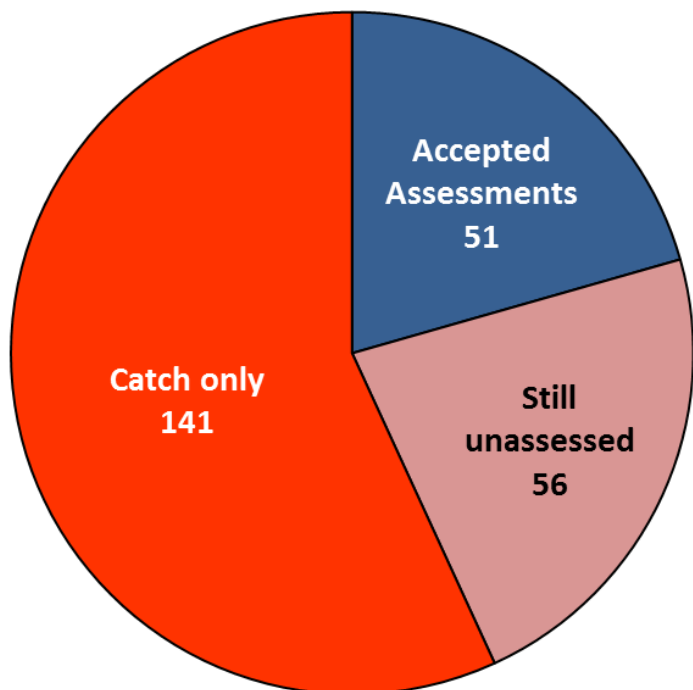
**Data from Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, last updated 2015*

Balancing the three T's

Current assessment rates are too slow ≈ 1 per year per person



All FMPs



Potential assessment leads: 20 people**

Stocks that can be assessed: 107

Assessment rate in current processes: 1 pyr^{-1}

Average time between assessments: 5.3 years

***Hypothetical and illustrative staff size, actual staff size is smaller and fluctuates*

**Data from Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, last updated 2015*



NOAA FISHERIES

Existing process

Benchmark

Intended to complete a thorough evaluation that accommodates the input of stakeholders and reviewers while under strict deadlines for providing management advice

Standard

Address specific concerns (expressed in the TORS) without deviating too much from previous benchmark

Update

Deviates as little as possible from previous benchmark



Existing process

Benchmark

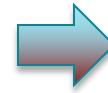
Intended to complete a thorough evaluation that accommodates the input of stakeholders and reviewers while under strict deadlines for providing management advice

Standard

Address specific concerns (expressed in the TORS) without deviating too much from previous benchmark

Update

Deviates as little as possible from previous benchmark



Issues

Data providers have difficulty meeting deadlines because key decisions made along the way can change what is required

Results often criticized by reviewers, but there is little time to address their concerns

Deadlines are pushed and often missed

Word "benchmark" implies "best" to many when in fact it is the first time some components have been examined and implemented

Existing process

Benchmark

Intended to complete a thorough evaluation that accommodates the input of stakeholders and reviewers while under strict deadlines for providing management advice



Issues

Data providers have difficulty
Can't address suggestions
Deadlines pushed or missed
Loaded language (Benchmark)

Standard

Address specific concerns (expressed in the TORS) without deviating too much from previous benchmark



Reasonably fast, but sometimes criticized by stakeholders who think a "benchmark" is better

Update

Deviates as little as possible from previous benchmark



Fast, but often criticized by stakeholders who think a "benchmark" is better and would like more involvement.

Existing process

Benchmark

Intended to complete a thorough evaluation that accommodates the input of stakeholders and reviewers while under strict deadlines for providing management advice



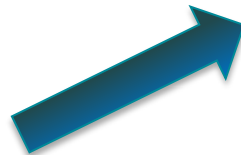
Standard

Address specific concerns (expressed in the TORS) without deviating too much from previous benchmark



Update

Deviates as little as possible from previous benchmark



Proposed Changes

Research Cycle

Like a Benchmark, but not intended to produce assessment results for immediate advice to management. The goal is to build a robust tool that will be used to develop timely advice.

Operational Assessment

May follow existing Standard or Update Processes: Designated analysts apply the tool developed by the Research Assessment to the most recent data sets to produce timely management advice.

Research Cycle

- Test, document and review assessment approaches, incorporate new research findings, and evaluate new data streams;
- Conducted similar to current benchmark process with an assessment panel, IPT-style communication and 1-2 workshops
- Review panel meeting with independent external participants (e.g., CIE)
- Findings thoroughly documented as an assessment report, and possibly a NOAA Tech Memo or journal publication commensurate with the degree of novelty of the methods.
- Unresolved issues and ideas for future improvements reported to begin the next cycle of research.
- Not intended to produce assessment results for immediate advice to management, but once vetted, will be operationalized

Operational assessments

- Produce timely advice to management
- Conducted by designated analysts using a suite of previously reviewed procedures and data sets, in consultation with an advisory body comprised of scientists and stakeholders with local expertise
- Minor changes to previous approaches may be considered, if agreed to by the SSC as part of the TORs.
- Findings documented succinctly with an executive summary that makes fishery management advice clearly and quickly accessible
- Anomalies, concerns and research recommendations are documented and made available for future considerations

Advantages of new approach

SEDAR Steering Committee 5/2017 Attachment 4

During research cycles

- Analysts can focus on more thoroughly addressing the major concerns of scientists and stakeholders without the conflicting pressure of finishing the assessment in time for management deadlines
- Suggestions from reviewers can be incorporated and used in the operational phase
- Data providers are not under pressure to provide the most recent data or repeatedly revise inputs
- More opportunities for scientific research that advance the state of the art

During operational assessments

- Standardized, pre-approved approaches will be used such that
 - Implementation errors will be reduced and throughput increased (analysts can focus on updating inputs, implementing only minor changes, and model diagnostics)
 - Assessments will be more reproducible and require less advanced technical skills
 - Data providers will be able to produce inputs more quickly and with minimal effort
- Emphasis will be placed on succinct communication of management advice in plain language (rather than the details of the assessment)



How will it work?

SEDAR Steering Committee 5/2017 Attachment 4

Below is a hypothetical example of two years in the SEDAR cycle with five lead assessment analysts available.

- After two years, 3 research track assessments and 10 operational assessments would be complete
- Long term averages with 5 analysts
 - 1-2 research track assessments per year
 - 4-6 operational assessments per year

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------------|---------|-----|-----|---------|----------|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|---------|----------|---------|-----|---------|-----|-----|---------|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
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| Research Track Assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | | Stock 3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | | | | | | Stock 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | | | | Stock 5 | | | | | | | Stock 6 | | | | | | | Stock 1 | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | Stock 7 | | | | | | Stock 8 | | | | | | | | Stock 9 | | | | | | | | | |
| Operational Assessment | | | | | Stock 10 | | | | | | | Stock 11 | | | | | | | | Stock 12 | | | | |



Why make this change now?

We are fast approaching SEDAR 60

- This has provided a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge about the required data, modeling, and communications for our stock assessments
 - Use this experience and knowledge to make the process more efficient.
 - The wheel has been well thought out, designed and built – now lets put it to regular use and not try to re-think it.

Where do we want to be in 20 years?

- Not unreasonable to have annual population estimates for every managed stock
 - This is a step in that direction, shifting us toward more timeliness and efficiency

Questions?

SEDAR Research Track Implementation Minor Modifications – Extended Assessment Stage Approach

This document provides an initial approach for implementing the Research Track process that involves relatively minor changes to the existing benchmark approach. The assessment stage is doubled in length from 3 to 6 months. The expectation to provide management advice following the review workshop is removed, and the Operational Assessment stage added. The suggested timeline is based on the Research Track proposal presented at the September 2016 SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting.

Research Track: Stock ID Process - ~ 4.5 months

- Need to clearly identify process and timeline for determining Stock ID for Research Track assessments
- **Timing:** timing for Stock ID decision should follow the SEDAR Data Best Practices timeline (final decision should be available in advance of the Data Scoping call; ideally ~4-5 months in advance of Data Workshop)
- **Method:** In-person workshop or series of webinars; will be dependent on project, available budget, and if possible, will be decided in advance when developing schedule
- **Process:** The process outlined below is based on feedback received from the SEDAR Steering Committee regarding the Stock ID & Meristics workshop. It is streamlined and simplified somewhat, to provide a potentially more manageable, long-term approach for determining stock ID. Note that some additional options for this step are provided at the end of this document.
- **Recommended Approach**
 1. Stock ID Work Group will develop Stock ID recommendation (via workshop or series of webinars) and document findings in Stock ID Work Group report.
 - a. The Work Group will be similar to those convened for Blueline Tilefish and Gray Snapper.
 - b. Will include SSC & Technical representatives from all Cooperators and Councils likely affected
 2. Independent Peer Review of the Stock ID recommendations, by a panel to include SSC, mgmt. rep, assessment rep, and optional slots for additional expertise.
 - a. Anticipate being held via webinar to control costs
 - b. Panelists shall be independent of those on the Stock ID workgroup.
 - c. Workgroup chair will present findings to this group.
 - d. Need to address biological and management risks within the Charge and TORs.
 3. Science and Management Leadership Call; to be held when a change in Stock ID is recommended that causes a stock to cross Cooperator boundaries; will involve Cooperators, Management (Regional Office), and Science (Science Center) entities; Leadership Group will resolve the discrepancy and provide guidance on the appropriate TORs to provide the necessary and appropriate management parameters

Research Track: Data Stage ~ 4.5 months

- Data Stage in the Research Track will follow the Data Best Practices timeline
 - If not, what should the timeline look like?

- Terminal Year
 - It is acknowledged that the data in the Research Track will not always be the most up-to-date
 - Recommend that a terminal year be established for datasets to ensure a reasonable base line.
 - Consider the Scamp assessment starting in 2018, the terminal year could be 2015
 - Could reduce unexpected outcomes in the Operational assessment
 - Could help ensure data are available for the Operational assessment
 - Datasets with information more recent than the base terminal year will be accepted.
- Data Best Practices timeline represents 'hard deadlines' for the data providers, meaning that they, for the most part, will not be expected to contribute further to the assessment
 - Is there an expectation that data providers will need to go back and reproduce datasets/analyses throughout the Research Track process. e.g., an alternative way of aggregating catch (and thus length and age comps) is considered?
- Final deliverable from the Data Stage is a DW report, similar to current DW report.
 - Data will be summarized through the baseline terminal year of each dataset. Need to ensure there is clear record with justification for each data decision as necessary for review
 - Does the current DW report outline capture the key information that needs to be documented? Should other info be added? Can some info be omitted?
- Working papers and reference documents will continue.

Research Track: Assessment Stage – 6 months

- Assessment stage of the Research Track will be operationally similar to current 'IPT' approach (e.g. milestone webinars held approximately monthly with informal communication between analysts and Panel members, as necessary)
 - Are the current webinar milestones appropriate (with the exception of any addressing status)
 - Consideration of in-person workshops – timing, topics, justification
- Timeline doubled for model development to approximately 6 months.
 - Is this adequate time, considering that there should not be data delays due to ensuring a recent terminal year?
- Final deliverable from the Assessment Stage will be a report similar to current AW report in terms of documenting the assessment method and uncertainties.
 - The report will not provide status determinations.
 - The report will focus more on factors that influence model performance than specific results.
 - The report will document the models considered and provide justification for the chosen model approach.
 - Working papers can be used to document the details of topics explored during the research track, with recommendations and resolution of alternatives explored in working papers addressed in the AW report.

- The AW Report will include clear and specific recommendations for the data and model approach to be applied in the Operational Assessment.
- Report should address projection methods, considerations and details. Include recommendations for assuming fishery conditions between TY and year 1.

Research Track: Review Stage, 2 months

- There are limitations on scheduling flexibility that are beyond our control.
 - Per CIE contact: RW month will need to be set 6 months in advance
 - RW dates will need to be set 3 months in advance;
 - Additionally will need to allow time to find available meeting space for workshop (timing for this is largely dependent on workshop location – shorter in Beaufort, longer in Miami or St. Pete.) 3 months lead time may not always be enough to guarantee preferred locations.
- Final deliverable from the Review Stage will be a summary RW report and separate individual CIE reviewer reports
- The RW will not be asked to provide status recommendations
- RW composition and general approach unchanged

Research Track: Final Deliverable

- The final research track deliverable will be a composite report similar to current SAR – Intro, DW, AW, RW reports merged into final SAR.
- The final SAR deliverable will be disseminated similar to what is done now (e.g. prior to SSC review final SAR distributed via memo to relevant Cooperators & participants and posted to SEDAR website)
 - Dissemination dates are required for the mandated Peer Review Plans.
- Dissemination of the Final SAR will conclude SEDAR's management of the Research Track. (no change from current practices)

Research Track: Post SEDAR Process and SSC Review, 12+ months

- Administrative record keeping shifts to the Cooperator for post-dissemination activities.
 - SSC comments regarding the RT and how they are implemented in the RT will be documented by the Council-SSC Administrative Record.
 - Councils requested to provide relevant SSC reports to SEDAR for posting with the assessment on the SEDAR website
- Research Track results presented to the SSC by the analytical team, and to the Council if requested (no change from current practices)
- To save time and travel, the SSC review of the RT should include guidance for the Operational assessment.
 - Should the analytical team be allowed to begin addressing model issues or improvements prior to the SSC Review of the Research Track?
 - For example, sometimes reviewers make recommendations based on hypotheticals that do not pan out. The SSC could resolve such issues and recommend whether such recommendations should be carried forth to the OA...evaluate if the change did what a reviewer thought it might?

- The ability to do this may be determined by the timeline between the RT and the SSC review. However, if this is considered useful the time can be provided.
- After analytical team incorporates reviewer and SSC comments, is it necessary to have some level of review before the Operational Assessment proceeds?

Operational Assessment

- What level of support is expected from SEDAR staff (e.g. develop ToR, schedule/deadlines, etc)? Will role be dependent on how much additional work needs to be done per reviewer and SSC comments/feedback (e.g. continuum between current Standard and Update support)?
- Who determines whether Operational assessment will be conducted more similar to current Standard or Update assessment? What are the relevant considerations? Should the SSC make recommendations?
- Do Operational Assessments need to always have the most recent data? Will all datasets need to be updated and/or will it be specified in the ToR?

Example Research Track Timeline Dec 2016 – May 2018 (~18 months)

- **Stock ID: Dec 2016 – mid April 2017 (~4.5 months)**
 - Stock ID Data Scoping - Work Group Report completion: Dec 2016 - mid-Feb 2017
 - Stock ID Review Process: mid-Feb 2017 – mid-April 2017
- **Data Stage: May 2017 – mid Sept 2017 (~4.5 months)**
 - Data Scoping Call through DW report completion
 - Following the SEDAR Data Best Practices timeline
 - Target terminal year: 2015
- **Assessment Stage: mid October 2017 – March 2018 (~6 months)**
 - Pre-Assessment Webinar through AW report completion
 - Assessment development time doubled
- **Review Stage: April 2018 – May 2018 (~2 months)**
 - Distribution of Reviewer Materials through RW report completion
- **Final Research Track SAR dissemination: early June 2018**
 - Concludes SEDAR role
- **Operational Assessment Completed**
 - September 2018 for a 2017 Terminal year.

SEDAR Research Track & Operational Assessments Process Development
Working Group Discussions and Recommendations
4/21/2017

Background and Introduction

The 2018 SEDAR schedule includes two SEDAR Research Track Assessments (SA/GoM Scamp and Atlantic Cobia). Due to the timing of these assessments (scheduled to start the first and second quarters of 2018), draft SEDAR guidelines for the Research Track and Operational Assessment process need to be developed for initial SEDAR Steering Committee review at their May 2017 meeting. Additional SEDAR Steering Committee review and preliminary approval of the approach will occur at their September 2017 meeting. Final approval of SEDAR SOPPs addressing the Research Track process will be withheld until an assessment is completed under the research track approach and the process evaluated.

SEDAR staff drafted a general outline based on our understanding of the Research Track process as described at the September 2016 SEDAR Steering Committee meeting. This initial draft builds on the existing SEDAR Benchmark process and in many ways remains similar to the current benchmark approach. We have identified a number of questions on which we would like feedback and guidance from this working group, including SEFSC data and analytical team leads, before moving into the detailed process documents such as project schedules, TORs and SEDAR SOPPs.

The information here was meant to serve as a starting point for discussions by the working group. It is organized around the primary steps of the Research Track process, as we believe it will be more efficient to first discuss the concept or vision for the research track before delving into the details of the process, such as schedules and TORs.

Summary of Progress and Discussions

To date, SEDAR staff has facilitated two webinars with SEFSC team leads to discuss the Research Track approach. During the first webinar a draft of this document was provided that laid out a number of decision points. It also included a general research track application and timeline, based on applying the suggested timeline of the September 2016 proposal to the existing benchmark process and including more recent developments such as the data best practices timeline and the stock ID resolution process.

On the first webinar (February 15), the group discussion focused on broad, overarching topics of the Research Track/Operational assessment approach. The intent was to develop a vision for how the process would operate and consider topics such as guiding principles and triggers. Most of the discussion from this webinar is documented in topic I below.

On the second webinar (March 1) the group reviewed the notes from the first webinar, continued those discussions, and went a bit further into the process details with a focus on how the Stock ID and Data stages would work under Research Track Assessments. Next steps identified on the second webinar included the SEFSC analytical teams developing an example Scope of Work/Work Schedule document for Scamp, which could potentially serve as a template for future RT assessments. Key discussion points from this webinar are summarized, but there was not a push to get consensus, so it is unclear whether this feedback represents the full consensus of the group.

A third webinar was scheduled (April 12) to discuss the draft Scamp Scope of Work, but was subsequently canceled due to low participant availability and inadequate progress on the Scope of Work document. The SEFSC intends to provide a draft Scamp Scope of Work for the SEDAR Steering Committee briefing book.

Workgroup Participants

SEFSC, Miami Assessment Team: Clay Porch, Shannon Cass-Calay
SEFSC, Beaufort Assessment Team: Erik Williams, Kyle Shertzer
SEFSC, HMS Assessment Team: Enric Cortes
SEFSC, Data Team: Steve Turner, David Gloeckner
SEDAR: John Carmichael, Julie Neer, Julia Byrd

Navigating this document

This document was modified following workgroup webinars to address group recommendations and questions. Italics and occasional sub-headers are used to help differentiate the original text of this document from the discussion and recommendations.

Research Track Process and Guidance Development Overview (initial plans)

1. Steering Committee endorses concept: September 2016
2. General Approach developed – Winter/early Spring 2017
 - a. SEDAR staff conceptual draft: January 2017
 - b. Working group (SEFSC team leads) reviews Concept: by February 8
 - c. Webinar discussion with SEDAR & SEFSC leads – February 15.
 - *The group did not reach consensus on the overall concept and driving factors, and was therefore unable to address process details. Additional webinars were recommended.*
 - *Second webinar held March 1. Complexity of the process becoming apparent; additional discussion desired; suggested developing an example “scope of work” to describe the details of a particular assessment project.*
 - *Third webinar scheduled April 12; cancelled.*
 - d. First draft of Approach, addressing process Outline, Schedule, TOR frameworks- with emphasis on stock ID process – late February-early March – developed by SEDAR, review by SEFSC leads. (Not completed)
 - e. Draft Approach provided to SOPPs Team – potentially necessary by mid-March (depend on steering committee meeting scheduling – should be settled by Feb 1) (Not completed)
(The SOPPs team was proposed by the Steering Committee to review initial SOPPs recommendations. It will include representatives from all the SEDAR Cooperators.)
NOTE: Not all Cooperators have identified SOPPs team members. SEDAR staff did not pursue this beyond the initial request due to the lack of progress at the workgroup stage, and resulting lack of a document for the SOPPs group to review.
 - f. Draft Approach for SEDAR Steering Committee Briefing Book: April 20 to May 19, depending on when meeting is scheduled. Not completed. Summary documents detailing deliberations so far provided for the Steering Committee. Includes a decision document with various research track options and a draft statement of work.

3. SEDAR Steering Committee Review & Comment: May 2017
4. Further development of process, including SOPPs, TORs and Schedules: Summer 2017
5. Steering Committee Review of entire approach and approval for initial Scamp and Cobia applications: September 2017
6. Implementation of approach for Scamp and Cobia: 2018-2019
7. Process evaluated: mid 2019
8. Final Steering Committee approval of SOPPs and guidance information (e.g., default TORs, schedules): September 2019.

I. OVERARCHING TOPICS

The workgroup recommended at the start of the first webinar that the best way to initiate this discussion was to first consider a number of overarching topics to define the research track process with the goal of developing a “Vision.” Points raised during this discussion, which occupied most of the first webinar, are summarized in the bullets below.

Why adopt the Research Track and Operational Assessments?

- *Anticipated to increase overall productivity by focusing more on Operational assessments*
- *Benchmark process timeline impediments*
 - *Deadlines missed early in process (data stage) reduce time available for the Assessment stage which is often working under a hard deadline to meet the scheduled review*
 - *Current timeline doesn’t allow opportunity to explore all relevant data and hinders ability to thoroughly evaluate other modeling approaches*
 - *Can often get good suggestions from review process and/or through the SSC review, but current benchmark process does not provide an opportunity for these suggestions to be incorporated until the species is scheduled for another assessment*

What is the VISION for the Research Track Process?

- *Emphasis on developing a highly credible stock assessment framework*
- *Serves to answer questions, test hypotheses, or otherwise explore new ideas for assessing a stock or stocks*
- *Allows for complete flexibility in data and model choice*
- *Process expected to last up to a year or more and involves a series of public meetings; includes thorough documentation of new data/method/performance and extensive investigation of model performance*
- *Review completed by a Panel of independent experts, with the Council SSC’s (or Cooperator equivalent) ultimately providing recommendations for further improvement; review should be commensurate with the degree of novelty and controversy*
- *Engages more people (including researchers) early on in the assessment process*

What triggers a Research Track Assessment?

- *Triggers for Research Track Assessment include:*
 - *First time assessments*

- *Major issue identified in previous assessment that SSC feels justify the research track approach and independent peer review*
- *SEFSC recommendation that an assessment needs significant additional work to incorporate new datasets, new modeling techniques or apply a new model framework*
- *Addressing 'global' issues that affect multiple species and assessments (e.g. model changes, new data source, etc.)*
- *Default should be to conduct an Operational assessment (with the exception of first time assessments).*
 - *Burden of proof on group (e.g. Cooperators, SEFSC, etc.) requesting RT assessment*
 - *Change from an Operational Assessment to RT Assessment has implications on the timeline, when mgmt. advice will be provided, etc.*

What are the Research Track Data Expectations, and how do they differ from the current approach?

- *Not necessary to have the level of data completeness and timeliness expected for the current benchmark process.*
- *Preliminary, incomplete or provisional data are okay because the process will focus more on concepts and approaches.*
- *Not necessary to have most recent years of data, expected that most recent info will be included in the following operational assessment.*
- *Intent is to reduce the need for data providers to do lots of work re-compiling or re-analyzing data during RT process; not necessary, and potentially not possible, for data to be compiled during the data workshop in multiple ways to address various assessment assumptions*
- *Data providers will need to be given guidelines on what data are needed and how they should be compiled and provided; the focus will be on flexibility to allow exploration of hypothesis during the assessment phase; data providers should only have to provide data once and analysts can aggregate as necessary throughout the process*
- *Expect to establish a soft or target terminal year, while recognizing that not all datasets may reach it, and that the terminal year may not be as 'recent' as expected under the current benchmark process.*
- *A data step goal will be to identify all available datasets early in process – even if some datasets cannot initially be provided, as long as analytical team is aware of the dataset and it can be submitted at a future date*
- *Implications for ageing labs: if stock has not been assessed before, need to plan 2-3 years in advance for enough ages to be provided; this timeframe would not be as critical for stocks that have been assessed before*
- *Ensure appropriate timing for data compilation is incorporated when developing project schedules. Data Best Practices deadlines may require revision to adapt to the Research Track approach.*

What are the guiding forces for Research Track Assessments (e.g. science and hypothesis testing vs management needs) and how should conflicts be resolved in the guiding forces?

- *Research track should be driven by science and the hypothesis testing necessary to give a robust assessment*

- *The timeline is flexible but not completely open ended - a target end date is required for planning the project and scheduling the peer review.*
- *It is recognized that data and model explorations may continue indefinitely. SEFSC may need to do work in advance of SEDAR RT to help provide reasonable limits on the issues to be addressed in a Research Track, and to develop an appropriate project timeline given the scope of work.*
- *Potential triggers or exceptions should be identified that allow deviation from the planned timeline, and a process derived for evaluating the triggers and providing appropriate guidance by the leadership level (Cooperators and Steering Committee)*
- **Proposed Approach:**
 - *SEFSC will develop an initial Scope of Work. When a Research Track assessment is requested by a Cooperator, SEFSC will conduct preliminary evaluations to prepare a proposed Scope of Work. The Scope of Work will identify potential issues, research and internal and external data sources; provide guidance on the timeline; recommend initial Terms of Reference including model techniques to evaluate*
 - *The recommended Scope of Work should provide options (preliminary hypotheses) and corresponding timelines for addressing the research and assessment needs within a reasonable timeline*
 - *The Scope of Work should identify triggers and key milestones within the process that will identify if and when changes to the timeline are needed (e.g. end of Data Stage, few months into Assessment stage, etc.). The intent is that the triggers and milestones be developed to allow flexibility for the process to respond to issues that arise.*
 - *The Scope of Work should be developed and reviewed by the appropriate cooperator before being brought to the Steering Committee for project scheduling. The Cooperator is free to pursue whatever technical review of the preliminary Scope of Work it deems necessary and appropriate.*
 - *Initial requests that trigger SEFSC development of a Research Track Scope of Work need not be made at the Steering Committee, and can be addressed by the Cooperator directly to the SEFSC.*

What factors drive the timeline?

- *SEFSC RT Proposal timeline, supported by the Steering Committee, indicates completion 9-14 months after DW*
- *CIE timeline:*
 - *1 year in advance of a Peer Review: Identify the quarter in which the review will occur*
 - *CIE timeline allows for flexibility of +/- one quarter*
 - *Changing fiscal years in subsequent steps may create issues that cause delay.*
 - *4 months in advance of the review: identify the month the review will occur*
 - *2 months in advance of the review: identify the dates of the review.*
- *There was discussion of withholding review planning until the assessment is complete.*
 - *This offers maximum flexibility, but will likely cause substantial delay in review (~6 months?) and lengthen overall timeline beyond that proposed to Steering Committee.*
 - *Some concern was raised that the added delay could detract from the review, as the key personnel will become involved in other assessment projects between AW report completion and the review.*

- *Also concerns that the project will become open-ended, making it difficult to plan subsequent projects.*
- *Potential option for scheduling review:*
 - *Have a routinely scheduled review (same month/dates every year) that is not tied to any particular assessment project.*
 - *At the 4 month point required by the CIE, the specific species, # of species, etc. would be identified.*
 - *This could potentially allow more flexibility within RT while still meeting CIE review timeline. It may also result in some reviews being cancelled because the work is not complete, and difficulty in managing the review workload if multiple projects reach their end point near the same time. It is not clear how this would play out in the CIE process.*

II. Details and relation to existing process components

A. Project Schedule

- Because the Operational Assessment provides required management information, its timing and data deadlines should be included on the Research Track assessment schedule. A detailed Operational Assessment deadline will be prepared closer to its start, along with its TORs, similar to what is done now for standard and update assessments.

B. Research Track: Stock ID Process - ~ 4.5 months

- Need to clearly identify process and timeline for determining Stock ID for Research Track assessments
- **Timing:** timing for Stock ID decision should follow the SEDAR Data Best Practices timeline (final decision should be available in advance of the Data Scoping call; ideally ~4-5 months in advance of Data Workshop)
- **Method:** In-person workshop or series of webinars; will be dependent on project, available budget, and if possible, will be decided in advance when developing schedule
- **Process:** The process outlined below is based on feedback received from the SEDAR Steering Committee regarding the Stock ID & Meristics workshop. It is streamlined and simplified somewhat, to provide a potentially more manageable, long-term approach for determining stock ID. Note that some additional options for this step are provided at the end of this document.
- **Recommended Approach**
 1. Stock ID Work Group will develop Stock ID recommendation (via workshop or series of webinars) and document findings in Stock ID Work Group report.
 - a. The Work Group will be similar to those convened for Blueline Tilefish and Gray Snapper.
 - b. Will include SSC & Technical representatives from all Cooperators and Councils likely affected
 2. Independent Peer Review of the Stock ID recommendations, by a panel to include SSC, mgmt. rep, assessment rep, and optional slots for additional expertise.
 - a. Anticipate being held via webinar to control costs
 - b. Panelists shall be independent of those on the Stock ID workgroup.
 - c. Workgroup chair will present findings to this group.
 - d. Need to address biological and management risks within the Charge and TORs.
 3. Science and Management Leadership Call; to be held when a change in Stock ID is recommended that causes a stock to cross Cooperator boundaries; will involve Cooperators, Management (Regional Office), and Science (Science Center) entities; Leadership Group will resolve the discrepancy and provide guidance on the appropriate TORs to provide the necessary and appropriate management parameters

SEFSC Feedback on Stock ID from Second Research Track Webinar

- *Separate stock ID stage not needed; stock ID hypotheses would be tested and recommendations would be made during RT process; unclear when this would happen in the process – SEFSC wants*

flexibility in timing, but this decision impacts all data compilation and analyses, so if this decision is made late in process could impact timeline

- *In recent SEDARs, decisions for unit stock made using provisional data which has been problematic; current Benchmark timing doesn't allow all data to be available to make stock ID decision*
- *SEDAR Data Best Practice Data Timeline noted that Stock ID was one of the decisions that needed to be made early in the process since it affects all available datasets; the timing for the Stock ID decision for the RT does not necessarily have to follow what was recommended through SEDAR Data BP*
- *Need to ensure all Cooperators that could be affected by Stock ID decisions are involved in process*
- *Need to consider effect of assessment and management advice when making stock ID recommendations*
- *Need to clarify the differences between population unit and assessment and/or management unit; if multiple populations are identified, it doesn't mean the assessment or management must follow those populations units*
- *Burden of proof needs to be met when assessment stock structure recommendations do not follow Cooperator jurisdictions*
- *Stock ID decisions will affect compilation/analysis of all datasets; need to provide guidance (e.g. what are hypotheses) to data providers near beginning of RT assessment so they are able to prepare and analyze their data to test hypotheses*
- *Will need to balance the amount of flexibility desired in the stock ID decision with what is actually feasible (e.g. workload, timeline) for data providers and analytical team*

C. Research Track: Data Stage ~ 4.5 months

Recommendations from the first webinar that are relevant to the Data Stage have been cut and pasted as italicized text into the appropriate topics within the 'Data Stage' section of this document that follows.

- *Research Track Data Expectations*
 - *Not necessary to have the level of data completeness and timeliness expected for the current benchmark process.*
 - *Preliminary, incomplete or provisional data are okay because the process will focus more on concepts and approaches.*
 - *A data step goal will be to identify all available datasets early in process – even if some datasets cannot initially be provided, as long as analytical team is aware of the dataset and it can be submitted at a future date*
- *Timing*
 - *Data Stage in the Research Track should follow the Data Best Practices timeline*
 - *If not, what should the timeline look like?*
 - *Ensure appropriate timing for data compilation is incorporated when developing project schedules. Data Best Practices deadlines may require revision to adapt to the Research Track approach.*

- *Implications for ageing labs: if stock has not been assessed before, need to plan 2-3 years in advance for enough ages to be provided; this timeframe would not be as critical for stocks that have been assessed before*
- Terminal Year
 - *Not necessary to have most recent years of data, expected that most recent info will be included in the following operational assessment.*
 - Recommend that a terminal year be established for datasets to ensure a reasonable baseline; *establish a soft or target terminal year, while recognizing that not all datasets may reach it, and that the terminal year may not be as 'recent' as expected under the current benchmark process.*
 - Consider the Scamp assessment starting in 2018, the terminal year could be 2015
 - Could reduce unexpected outcomes in the Operational assessment
 - Could help ensure data are available for the Operational assessment
 - Datasets with information more recent than the target terminal year will be accepted.
- Data Best Practices timeline represents 'hard deadlines' for the data providers, meaning that they, for the most part, will not be expected to contribute further to the assessment
 - Is there an expectation that data providers will need to go back and reproduce datasets/analyses throughout the Research Track process. e.g., an alternative way of aggregating catch (and thus length and age comps) is considered?
 - *Feedback from first webinar:*
 - *Intent is to reduce the need for data providers to do lots of work re-compiling or re-analyzing data during RT process; not necessary, and potentially not possible, for data to be compiled during the data workshop in multiple ways to address various assessment assumptions*
 - *Data providers will need to be given guidelines on what data are needed and how they should be compiled and provided; the focus will be on flexibility to allow exploration of hypothesis during the assessment phase; data providers should only have to provide data once and analysts can aggregate as necessary throughout the process*
- Final deliverable from the Data Stage is a DW report, similar to current DW report.
 - Data will be summarized through the baseline terminal year of each dataset. Need to ensure there is clear record with justification for each data decision as necessary for review
 - Does the current DW report outline capture the key information that needs to be documented? Should other info be added? Can some info be omitted?
 - Per initial (Feb 15) webinar discussions: DW report's role should be to document all data decisions; important to document sequence of events which led to decisions and include figures/tables to illustrate why made

decisions; not necessary for this to include final data tables; may need to develop new DW report outline

- Working papers and reference documents will continue.

SEFSC Feedback from Second Research Track Webinar

- *Role of Data Stage significantly changing from what is currently done under Benchmark assessments; focus more on exploring hypotheses; need to develop guidance for data providers so it is clear what the expectations are for participating in RT and how they should prepare for RT assessments*
- *Lead analytical team will contact researchers/data providers/SSCs/Council staff/etc. to identify available data to inform development of Scope of Work; Scope of Work developed prior to start of RT assessment*
- *Separate stock ID process not needed; stock id hypotheses would be tested and recommendations would be made during RT process; unclear when this would happen in the process – SEFSC reps noted wanted flexibility in this, but this decision impacts all data compilation and analyses, so if this decision is made late in process could impact timeline*
- *Data providers initially provide raw data at lowest aggregated level possible; participate in compiling, analyzing, developing recommendations on data similar to what they do now under Benchmark DW*
- *Set stopping points throughout entire RT process where analysts consult with data providers*
- *Near end of Assessment Stage, when analysts have configuration(s) would like to take to review, check in with data providers to request data in the identified configuration(s) so that model(s) can be run for the review; data providers will be empowered to decide whether or not they can provide the updated data based on their workload at the time of the request*
- *Need to identify available data sources early in the RT process; this should be done prior to developing Scope of Work and draft ToRs*
- *Data don't need to be exact in RT process (focus on concepts; does not provide mgmt. advice); try to align data the best you can with assessment model decisions/configurations (e.g. stock structure, fleet structure, etc.), but don't need to match exactly; BUT getting data close to recommended configuration(s) for review will help ensure that fewer unidentified issues arise in Operational assessments*
- *Under RT, there doesn't seem to be as clear of a delineation between Data and Assessment stages as there is now under Benchmark process*
- *Distinction between provisional data vs. analytical products (growth models, CPUE, reproduction analysis, comps); data providers that produce analytical products may need to be more heavily involved throughout RT process than those that provide raw data*
- *Potential disconnect between RT data intent and expectations? – RT intent is to reduce the need for data providers to do a lot of work recompiling/reanalyzing data during RT assessment; BUT focus of RT Data Stage is exploring hypotheses; in order to evaluate hypotheses will need to look at data for hypotheses being considered – which likely means recompiling/reanalyzing the data in multiple ways; this could potentially increase workload of analyst, data providers, or both*

- *Data providers understand their data best; should participate in the decisions regarding how their data are used*
- *Unclear who would be responsible for recompiling/reanalyzing data to explore hypotheses under RT assessments; each region may want to continue to handle the process more similarly to what is currently done within their region for Benchmarks (e.g. South Atlantic seems to rely more on multiple data providers and GoM seems to rely more on lead analyst)*
- *Unclear whether data providers will be expected to produce same products as do now under Benchmark DW; these products rely on some key decisions (e.g. stock structure) that are currently recommended be made early in the process*
- *Interest in having data providers participate throughout RT process with analytical team; need to develop guidelines so expectations for data providers are clear; workload and/or time commitment may be different based on whether providing raw data or analytical products (e.g. growth model, comps, etc.)*
- *Potential workload issue for data providers? - if expected to participate throughout RT process (and potentially pull/compile/analyze data at the beginning and end of the process) and expected to compile/analyze data for increasing number of Operational Assessments – do data providers have capacity to do this?*

D. Research Track: Assessment Stage – 6 months

- Assessment stage of the Research Track will be operationally similar to current 'IPT' approach (e.g. milestone webinars held approximately monthly with informal communication between analysts and Panel members, as necessary)
 - Are the current webinar milestones appropriate (with the exception of any addressing status)
 - Consideration of in-person workshops – timing, topics, justification
- Timeline doubled for model development to approximately 6 months.
 - Is this adequate time, considering that there should not be data delays due to ensuring a recent terminal year?
- Final deliverable from the Assessment Stage will be a report similar to current AW report in terms of documenting the assessment method and uncertainties.
 - The report will not provide status determinations.
 - The report will focus more on factors that influence model performance than specific results.
 - The report will document the models considered and provide justification for the chosen model approach.
 - Working papers can be used to document the details of topics explored during the research track, with recommendations and resolution of alternatives explored in working papers addressed in the AW report.
 - The AW Report will include clear and specific recommendations for the data and model approach to be applied in the Operational Assessment.
 - Report should address projection methods, considerations and details. Include recommendations for assuming fishery conditions between TY and year 1.

E. Research Track: Review Stage, 2 months

- There are limitations on scheduling flexibility that are beyond our control. CIE timeline is as follows:
 - 1 year in advance: identify the quarter in which year will occur
 - CIE timeline allows for flexibility of +/- a quarter
 - Changing fiscal years in subsequent steps may create issues that cause delay
 - 4 months in advance of the review: identify the month the review will occur
 - 2 months in advance: identify the dates of the review
 - Additionally will need to allow time to find available meeting space for workshop (timing for this is largely dependent on workshop location – shorter in Beaufort, longer in Miami or St. Pete.) 2 months lead time may not always be enough to guarantee preferred locations.
- Final deliverable from the Review Stage will be a summary RW report and separate individual CIE reviewer reports
- The RW will not be asked to provide status recommendations
- RW composition and general approach unchanged

SEFSC Feedback from Second Research Track Webinar

- *Need to clarify what product will be reviewed at the end of RT and what the reviewers are expected to evaluate; what will the review ToRs include?*
- *Intent to have reviewers evaluate data/model decisions but not actual assessment model?*
- *Will reviewers be able to evaluate decisions if they do not review a working model, model diagnostics, etc.?*
- *Will this complicate things for the Operational Assessments (e.g. have unforeseen issues arise that don't get vetted during the RT)?*

F Research Track: Final Deliverable

- The final research track deliverable will be a composite report similar to current SAR – Intro, DW, AW, RW reports merged into final SAR.
- The final SAR deliverable will be disseminated similar to what is done now (e.g. prior to SSC review final SAR distributed via memo to relevant Cooperators & participants and posted to SEDAR website)
 - Dissemination dates are required for the mandated Peer Review Plans.
- Dissemination of the Final SAR will conclude SEDAR's management of the Research Track. (no change from current practices)

G. Research Track: Post SEDAR Process and SSC Review, 12+ months

- Administrative record keeping shifts to the Cooperator for post-dissemination activities.
 - SSC comments regarding the RT and how they are implemented in the RT will be documented by the Council-SSC Administrative Record.
 - Councils requested to provide relevant SSC reports to SEDAR for posting with the assessment on the SEDAR website

- Research Track results presented to the SSC by the analytical team, and to the Council if requested (no change from current practices)
- To save time and travel, the SSC review of the RT should include guidance for the Operational assessment.
 - Should the analytical team be allowed to begin addressing model issues or improvements prior to the SSC Review of the Research Track?
 - For example, sometimes reviewers make recommendations based on hypotheticals that do not pan out. The SSC could resolve such issues and recommend whether such recommendations should be carried forth to the OA...evaluate if the change did what a reviewer thought it might?
 - The ability to do this may be determined by the timeline between the RT and the SSC review. However, if this is considered useful the time can be provided.
- After analytical team incorporates reviewer and SSC comments, is it necessary to have some level of review before the Operational Assessment proceeds?

H. Operational Assessment

- What level of support is expected from SEDAR staff (e.g. develop ToR, schedule/deadlines, etc)? Will role be dependent on how much additional work needs to be done per reviewer and SSC comments/feedback (e.g. continuum between current Standard and Update support)?
- Who determines whether Operational assessment will be conducted more similar to current Standard or Update assessment? What are the relevant considerations? Should the SSC make recommendations?
- Do Operational Assessments need to always have the most recent data? Will all datasets need to be updated and/or will it be specified in the ToR?

Appendix 1: Example South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Scamp Schedule

Research Track Timeline: Dec 2017 – June 2019 (~18 months)

(Based on timing of activities provided in the September 2016 proposal, and Steering Committee recommended timing of Operational Assessments following the Research Track)

- **Stock ID: Dec 2017 – mid April 2018 (~4.5 months)**
 - Stock ID Data Scoping - Work Group Report completion: Dec 2017 - mid-Feb 2018
 - Stock ID Review Process: mid-Feb 2018 – mid-April 2018
- **Data Stage: May 2018 – Sept 2018 (~4.5 months)**
 - Data Scoping Call through DW report completion
- **Assessment Stage: October 2018 – March 2019 (~6 months)**
 - Pre-Assessment Webinar through AW report completion
- **Review Stage: April 2019 – May 2019 (~2 months)**
 - Distribution of Reviewer Materials through RW report completion
 - “Hard” deadlines to meet CIE planning requirements
- **Final Research Track SAR dissemination: early June 2019**

Operational Assessment Example Timeline: July 2019 – July 2020.

- Review by SSCs: July 2019 – October 2019
- Operational Model Development & addressing Reviewer & SSC concerns: November 2019 – September 2020.

Appendix 2 : Additional Options for Stock ID

OPTION 1 – This sequence is most similar to how the process of stock ID evaluation and review was discussed at the Steering Committee in September 2017. That discussion was primarily directed toward the comprehensive workshop at which stock ID for multiple species was planned.

1. Stock ID Work Group will develop Stock ID recommendation (via workshop or series of webinars) and document findings in Stock ID Work Group report
2. Independent Peer Review of the Stock ID recommendations (to include CIE reviewers, SSC, mgmt. rep, assessment rep, optional slot for additional expertise). Requested by the Steering Committee for the comprehensive workshop.
 - Adds 8 weeks if held as a panel review: 2 weeks for Stock ID report completion, 1 week to distribute, 2 weeks review time, 1 week workshop, 2 weeks to complete report.
 - Steering Committee recommended that this level of independent review could be handled through CIE desk reviews in the research track process.
 - If handled by CIE desk reviews, it will require 8 weeks minimum.
3. SSC (or appropriate technical review body) review of Stock ID report and Independent peer review findings, by all Cooperators affected by the Stock ID recommendations; each Cooperator will conduct its own review, according to its own policies; joint meetings may be convened if deemed necessary by the appropriate Cooperators and/or SEDAR Steering Committee.
 - Adds a minimum of 6 weeks to the timeline: three weeks to receive and distribute reports from step 3, 1 week meeting, 2 weeks for SSC to complete report.
 - SEDAR Concern: this could result in multiple full SSC opinions on the stock ID and independent review recommendations, and no joint effort to resolve differences.
4. Science and Management Leadership Call; to be held when a change in Stock ID is recommended that causes a stock to cross Cooperator boundaries; will involve Cooperators, Management (Regional Office), and Science (Science Center) entities; Leadership Group will resolve the discrepancy and provide guidance on the appropriate ToRs to provide the necessary and appropriate management parameters
 - Add 4 weeks: 3 weeks to receive, distribute, review report and 1 week to finalize recommendations
 - Could be placed in the position of attempting to resolve divergent technical opinions from multiple technical bodies.

OPTION 2 – This includes similar steps as option 1, but shuffles the independent peer review and cooperator review. This allows the joint review of all cooperators to come after the individual review by each cooperator.

1. Stock ID Work Group will develop Stock ID recommendation (via workshop or series of webinars) and document findings in Stock ID Work Group report
2. CIE desk reviews of the Stock ID recommendations (Option)

- a. Adds 8 weeks
3. Cooperators may conduct additional reviews by their full SSCs
 - a. Adds 6 weeks
 - b. No presentation by work group chair planned. Must be handled by the SSC rep on the work group.
 - c. Recommend that this be held after the CIE desk review is received, if the desk review is desired, to ensure this group and the independent group that follows have the same information.
4. Independent Peer Review of the Stock ID recommendations, including comments on those recommendations by CIE desk review (if used) and SSCs, by a panel to include SSC, mgmt. rep, assessment rep, and optional slots for additional expertise)
 - a. Presume this would not include CIE reps if the desk review is chosen.
 - b. Recommend this be held via webinar to control costs.
 - i. Will that affect CIE representation if desired at this stage?
 - c. Members should be independent of the work group.
 - i. Are there other concerns over independence given the preceding full SSC review?
 - d. Presentations
 - i. Stock ID workgroup findings presented to the this group by the stock ID workgroup chair
 - ii. SSC review findings provided in report, or by presentation of an SSC rep other than the review representative. If travel involved, will be at Cooperator expense
 - e. This gives an opportunity for a joint body to review and resolve possible differences between technical groups.
5. Science and Management Leadership Call; to be held when a change in Stock ID is recommended that causes a stock to cross Cooperator boundaries; will involve Cooperators, Management (Regional Office), and Science (Science Center) entities; Leadership Group will resolve the discrepancy and provide guidance on the appropriate ToRs to provide the necessary and appropriate management parameters

SEDAR Research Track Process

Decision Document

SEDAR Steering Committee

May 5, 2017

This document summarizes several alternatives for implementing the SEDAR Research Track process. It was developed by SEDAR staff to help the Steering Committee evaluate approaches to Research Track assessments that emerged during webinar deliberations with SEFSC, since the Research Track Working Group did not reach consensus on a preferred approach for implementing the Research Track process. The alternatives shown here were defined and described by SEDAR staff based on notes taken during the webinars, and provided to working group members for review prior to the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting. Full details of the webinar deliberations and provided in a separate document , provided as Attachment 6 for the May 5, 2017 Steering Committee Meeting.

Summary of Alternatives:

1. Status quo
2. Extended AW Timeline
3. Research phase prior to SEDAR phase
4. Hypothesis driven Research Track
5. Modified Benchmark Process

I. Status Quo

This is included for thoroughness. The Committee could choose to proceed with the existing benchmark, standard, and update process.

| Pros | Cons |
|---|--|
| No process changes needed | Extremely deadline oriented |
| familiarity | Difficulty accommodating unexpected challenges |
| output rate relatively well known | Extended terminal year – dissemination delay |
| Roles & responsibilities defined and known | Reviewer suggestions not readily addressed |
| Favors transparency | Not timely |
| Follows recent data best practices approach | Difficult to obtain effective constituent feedback, particularly in the AW webinar process |

II. Extended AW timeline.

This is the approach originally put forward by SEDAR staff as a starting point to merge the principles and timeline of the Research Track as proposed in September 2017 with the existing SEDAR process. The approach for resolving stock ID, through a workshop and peer review, is included at the start of the process. It suggests only moderate changes to the general benchmark process as now followed, primarily to extend the assessment development window and adds the Operational Assessment (which removes the expectation to provide management

advice following the peer review). The data process is preserved, but the expectation to complete an assessment dataset with the most recent data is eliminated.

1. Stock ID Process: (4.5 months) resolved prior to data workshop, includes a peer review and final consideration by regional leadership group as described by the Steering Committee in September 2016.
2. Data Stage: (4.5 months) following the Data Best Practices timeline, and a data report deliverable similar to the current process. Primary change is a shift in focus from completing an assessment input dataset with most up to date information to identifying and evaluating data issues; may rely upon preliminary or provisional data for recent years.
3. Assessment Stage: (6 months) similar to the existing benchmark process, with the time allotted doubled from 3 to 6 months, and removing the expectation to provide management advice in the assessment report.
4. Peer Review Stage: (2 months) similar to existing peer review workshop. Includes CIE, so CIE deadlines affect timing for the peer review and assessment stage conclusion. SEDAR role concludes upon report dissemination (same as with current process).
5. Post SEDAR: (9 months) Research Track assessment tool is revised per the peer review, reviewed by SSCs, updated data obtained. Administrative record responsibilities shift to assessment agency and cooperator.
6. Operational assessment: (3 mos) Operational assessment prepared with most recent data similar to existing update process. Cooperators approve TORs that define the nature of the OA and the role of their technical reviewers. Goal is to complete the Operational Assessment within 12 months of the peer review.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|--|
| Minor process changes needed | Remains deadline oriented |
| Familiarity | May not easily accommodate all unexpected data or modeling challenges |
| Reduces delay between terminal year and management advice | Follows current sequential decision making process (DW to AW to RW) |
| Roles & responsibilities defined and known | Difficult to obtain effective constituent feedback, particularly in the AW webinar process |
| Favors transparency | |
| Extended AW timeline to aid thoroughness | |
| Adds Operational Assessment: Reviewer suggestions can be addressed | |
| Follows data best practices approach | |

III. Pre-Research Approach

This approach is a potential compromise discussed during the workgroup webinars, in response to suggestions that the Research Track should be hypothesis driven rather than timeline driven. In this version, the lead assessment agency (e.g., SEFSC) conducts an initial research phase to identify assessment approaches and develop models for further consideration through a typical SEDAR benchmark process. It essentially shifts the hypothesis driven research component to the analytical agency and removes that aspect of the process from SEDAR. While this was discussed on the second webinar, the group did not reach consensus on the details or a preferred method of implementing this alternative.

1. **Assessment Request:** A cooperator notifies the Steering Committee that a new assessment (i.e., “benchmark”) is desired of a particular species. This will ideally happen during the Committee deliberation of future priorities.
2. **Research Stage:** (no specific deadline) The lead assessment agency (i.e., SEFSC) will conduct research on how best to assess the chosen stock. They will solicit and evaluate data, develop and evaluate assessment models, per their standard practices. Stock ID will be addressed during this stage, and a proposed stock definition provided in the TORs for the next stage. SEDAR will not be involved in this stage. Once the analysts have developed an appropriate approach, they will inform the Steering Committee and Cooperator, and the stock will be added to the SEDAR assessment schedule for assessment development at the next available opportunity. The research deliverable will include a summary of the proposed modelling approach, results of the research leading up to the preferred model selection, and proposed Terms of Reference for the SEDAR stage to follow.
3. **SEDAR Stage:** (12-15 months) The stock will be scheduled by the Steering Committee, and the SEDAR process will proceed through the Data, Assessment and Review steps similar to the existing benchmark process. Management advice will be provided following the peer review model. Timelines could be slightly shortened from the status quo since the scope of the assessment is better defined and preliminary data are already available.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|--|
| Minor process changes needed in the SEDAR phase | No set timeline for when the SEDAR phase will begin |
| Familiarity | Resources required for Research phase may be difficult to estimate |
| Roles & responsibilities defined and known | May still result in terminal year-dissemination delays |
| Favors transparency in the SEDAR phase | Logistics and organizational burden on the analytical agency |
| Open, hypothesis-driven research stage can accommodate unexpected challenges | May be difficult to provide transparency during the research phase |
| Follows data best practices approach | |

IV. Open Research Track

This alternative represents an open, hypothesis driven research track approach. The typical SEDAR benchmark steps of data and assessment are somewhat merged to meet the needs of hypothesis testing, and the peer review is not scheduled until the analytical team determines the model is adequately developed.

1. Data Stage: (?) data compilation and evaluation step similar to the existing data workshop. Focus is on identifying potential data, data issues and solutions rather than assessment datasets; reliance upon preliminary or provisional data; data provided in disaggregated formats for further exploration by the analytical team.
2. Assessment Stage: (no deadline) data are explored and evaluated, models developed and evaluated based on hypothesis testing. Stock ID is addressed through this stage. May include regular meetings similar to the current AW webinar process, with added data provider representation. Reduced reliance on specific milestones to meet at each meeting, with discussion points based instead on model issues that develop.
3. Peer Review Stage: (2 months) Peer review is not scheduled until the analytical team has completed model development. Once scheduled, peer review is similar to existing review workshop. Peer review will evaluate the stock ID recommendation, and will not provide management advice.
4. Post SEDAR: (12+ months) Research Track assessment tool is revised per the peer review, reviewed by SSCs, updated data obtained. Administrative record responsibilities shift to assessment agency and cooperator.
5. Operational assessment: (time may vary) Operational assessment prepared with most recent data similar to existing update process. Cooperators approve TORs that define the nature of the OA and the role of their technical reviewers.

| Pros | Cons |
|---|--|
| Greatest flexibility to address data and assessment issues | Lack of a set timeline may be challenging for management |
| Operational assessment reduces terminal year-dissemination delays | Does not follow data best practices timeline |
| | Effective public involvement & transparency may be difficult during protracted assessment stage. |
| | Extended, open-ended commitment for data providers |
| | Performance of model may change once provisional data are updated |

| | |
|--|--|
| | Potential for additional delays in scheduling RW due to CIE timeline |
|--|--|

V. Modified Benchmark Process

This alternative represents a modification of the existing benchmark process to add a research oriented, hypothesis driven assessment stage between a typical SEDAR data and review workshop. Logistically, it is essentially a merging of alternative 2 and 3. Depending on how the Steering Committee is willing to view deadlines and driving factors, the assessment development phase could be structured around specific milestones and timelines, as per the existing process, or it could be more hypothesis driven.

1. Stock ID Process: (4.5 months) resolved prior to data workshop, includes a peer review and final consideration by regional leadership group as described by the Steering Committee in September 2016.
2. Data Stage: (4.5 months) following the Data Best Practices timeline, and a data report deliverable similar to the current process. Reduced focus on the most timely data and providing complete assessment datasets, to allow greater consideration of alternatives and identifying issues require research consideration.
3. Assessment Stage: (6 months to no specific deadline) focus is on model development and evaluation. Could include a panel of scientists that will work with the analysts, similar to existing AW panels.
4. Pre-Review Workshop: (4 months) Similar to existing Standard workshops. Once the assessment stage is complete and the assessment tool developed, the data and method will be reviewed. Final data review handled through webinars devoted to each data area, completed before the pre-review workshop (in-person). Goal of the workshop is model review and evaluation, consideration of uncertainties and sensitivities, development of projections. Participants include those from the assessment stage and ~2 independent scientists (from SSC or other experts), fishermen and other constituent reps.
5. Peer Review Stage: (2 months) similar to existing peer review workshop. Includes CIE, so CIE deadlines affect timing for the peer review and assessment stage conclusion. SEDAR role concludes upon report dissemination (same as with current process).
6. Post SEDAR: (9 months) Research Track assessment tool is revised per the peer review, reviewed by SSCs, updated data obtained. Administrative record responsibilities shift to assessment agency and cooperator.
7. Operational assessment: (3 months) Operational assessment prepared with most recent data similar to existing update process. Cooperators approve TORs that define the nature of the OA and the role of their technical reviewers.

| Pros | Cons |
|--|---|
| Familiarity | May not easily accommodate all unexpected data or modeling challenges |
| Reduces delay between terminal year and management advice | Follows current sequential decision making process (DW to AW to RW) |
| Roles & responsibilities defined and known | |
| Favors transparency; the pre-research phase expected to increase the effectiveness of constituent feedback on the assessment model | |
| Extended AW timeline to aid thoroughness | |
| Adds Operational Assessment: Reviewer suggestions can be addressed | |
| Follows data best practices approach | |

Comparison

| Alternative | Management Advice | Duration ¹ | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Status Quo | Following RW | 15 mos | No changes |
| 2. Extended AW | Operational Assessment | 30 mos | Similar to the Sept. 2016 proposal. Extra time compared to status quo is due to the Operational Assessment (12 mos) and the added AW time (3 mos). |
| 3. Pre-SEDAR Research | Following RW | 12 mos + | Allows for research phase without the SEDAR council process limitations. Duration is 12 mos. once the SEDAR benchmark phase begins. |
| 4. Open Research Track | Operational Assessment | Unk | Hypothesis driven process with the most flexibility to address assessment issues. Duration could be defined if boundaries are placed on the time for research and development. |
| 5. Modified Benchmark | Operational Assessment | 30 mos to unk | Attempt to resolve differences between hypothesis driven open research and the SEDAR council process |

1. Duration based on the time from stock ID to management advice.



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SEDAR Assessment Projects

as of December 2016

SEDAR Assessments

| Start Year | SEDAR # | SPECIES & JURISDICTION | Assessment Track | Terminal Year of Data | Available to Cooperator |
|------------|---------|--|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2002 | 1 | SAFMC red porgy | Benchmark | 2001 | 2003 |
| | 2 | SAFMC vermilion snapper & black sea bass | Benchmark | 2001 | 2003 |
| 2003 | 3 | SAFMC & GMFMC yellowtail snapper; ASMFC Atlantic menhaden & croaker (Review) | Benchmark | 2001 | 2003 |
| | 4 | SAFMC tilefish & snowy grouper | Benchmark | 2002 | 2003 |
| | 5 | SAFMC & GMFMC king mackerel | Benchmark | 2002 | 2004 |
| | 6 | SAFMC & GMFMC goliath grouper & hogfish | Review | 2001 | 2004 |
| 2004 | 7 | GMFMC red snapper | Benchmark | 2003 | 2005 |
| | 8A | CFMC yellowtail snapper & spiny lobster | Benchmark | 2003 | 2005 |
| 2005 | 8B | FL FWC spiny lobster | Review | 2003 | 2005 |
| | 9 | GMFMC vermilion snapper, greater amberjack & gray triggerfish | Benchmark | 2004 | 2006 |
| | U | SAFMC black sea bass | Update | 2003 | April 2005 |
| | 11 | HMS large coastal sharks | Benchmark | 2004 | June 2006 |
| 2006 | 10 | SAFMC & GMFMC gag grouper | Benchmark | 2004 | 2006 |
| | 12 | GMFMC red grouper | Benchmark | 2005 | 2006 |
| | U | SAFMC red porgy | Update | 2004 | April 2006 |
| 2007 | 13 | HMS small coastal sharks | Benchmark | 2005 | September 2007 |
| | 14 | CFMC yellowfin grouper, mutton snapper & queen conch | Benchmark | 2005 | 2007 |
| | 15 | SAFMC greater amberjack & red snapper; FL FWC mutton snapper Review | Benchmark | 2006 | 2007 |
| | U | SAFMC vermilion snapper | Update | 2006 | June 2007 |
| 2008 | 16 | SAFMC & GMFMC king mackerel | Benchmark | 2006 | March 2009 |
| | 17 | SAFMC Spanish mackerel & vermilion snapper | Benchmark | 2007 | November 2008 |
| 2009 | 18 | ASMFC Atlantic red drum | Benchmark | 2007 | October 2008 |
| | 19 | SAFMC & GMFMC black grouper, SAFMC red grouper | Benchmark | 2008 | April 2010 |
| | U | GMFMC gag, red grouper GMFMC red snapper | Update | 2008 | August 2009 December 2009 |

| Start Year | SEDAR # | SPECIES & JURISDICTION | Assessment Track | Terminal Year of Data | Available to Cooperator |
|------------|---------|--|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2010 | 20 | ASMFC menhaden & croaker | Review | 2008 | March 2010 |
| | 21 | HMS sandbar, dusky & blacknose sharks | Benchmark | 2009 | September 2011 |
| | 22 | GMFMC yellowedge grouper & tilefish | Benchmark | 2009 | July/August 2011 |
| | 23 | FL FWC Goliath grouper | Benchmark | 2009 | March 2011 |
| | 24 | SAFMC red snapper | Benchmark | 2009 | October 2010 |
| | U | FL FWC spiny lobster | Update | 2009/2010 | December 2010 |
| | U | GMFMC greater amberjack | Update | 2008 | February 2011 |
| 2011 | 25 | SAFMC black sea bass and golden tilefish | Standard | 2010 | October 2011 |
| | 26 | CFMC silk snapper, parrotfish, and queen snapper | Benchmark | 2010 | December 2011 |
| | 27 | GSMFC menhaden | Review | 2010 | December 2011 |
| | 27A | FL FWC Yellowtail Snapper | Benchmark | 2010 | August 2012 |
| | 29 | HMS GOM blacktip shark | Standard | 2010 | May 2012 |
| | U | GMFMC vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish | Update | 2010 | December 2011 |
| 2012 | 28 | GMFMC and SAFMC cobia and Spanish mackerel | Benchmark | 2011 | SA: December 12 Gulf: April 2013 |
| | 30 | CFMC blue tang and queen triggerfish | Benchmark | 2011 | April 2013 |
| | 31 | GMFMC red snapper | Benchmark | 2011 | June 2013 |
| | U | SAFMC vermilion snapper and red porgy | Update | 2011 | October 2012 |
| | U | ASMFC Atlantic menhaden | Update | | 2012 |
| | U | FL FWC mutton snapper | Update | 2011 | August 2014 |
| 2013 | 32 | SAFMC blueline tilefish | Benchmark | 2011 | September/ November 2013 |
| | 32A | GSMFC menhaden | Review | | |
| | 33 | GMFMC gag and greater amberjack | Benchmark | 2012 | April 2014 |
| | 34 | HMS bonnethead and Atlantic sharpnose sharks | Standard | 2011 | October 2013 |
| | 36 | SAFMC snowy grouper | Standard | 2012 | October 2013 |
| | 37 | FL FWC hogfish | Review | 2012 | August 2014 |
| | 38 | SAFMC and GMFMC king mackerel | Benchmark | 2012 | August 2014 |
| | U | SAFMC black sea bass | Update | 2012 | March 2013 |
| 2014 | 35 | CFMC red hind | Benchmark | 2012 | October 2014 |
| | 39 | HMS smoothhound sharks, Gulf and Atlantic | Benchmark | 2012 | March 2015 |
| | 40 | ASMFC Atlantic menhaden | Review | 2012 | January 2015 |
| | 41 | SAFMC red snapper and gray triggerfish | Benchmark | 2014 | April 2016 |
| | 42 | GMFMC red grouper | Benchmark | 2013 | August 2015 |
| | U | GMFMC red snapper | Update | 2013 | December 2014 |
| | U | SAFMC gag grouper | Update | 2012 | April 2014 |
| 2015 | 43 | GMFMC gray triggerfish | Standard | 2013 | July 2015 |
| | 44 | ASMFC red drum | Review | 2013 | October 2015 |
| | 45 | GMFMC vermilion snapper | Standard | 2014 | March 2016 |
| | 46 | CFMC data limited stocks | Benchmark | 2013 | May 2016 |
| | 47 | FL FWC goliath grouper | Benchmark | 2014 | June 2016 |

| Start Year | SEDAR # | SPECIES & JURISDICTION | Assessment Track | Terminal Year of Data | Available to Cooperator |
|------------|---------|--|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2016 | 49 | GMFMC Data-limited species: red drum, lane snapper, wenchman, yellowmouth grouper, speckled hind, snowy grouper, Almaco jack, lesser amberjack | Benchmark | 2014 | December 2016 |
| | 50 | SAFMC/MAFMC/ GMFMC Atlantic blueline tilefish | Benchmark | 2015 | October 2017 |
| | 53 | SAFMC red grouper | Standard | 2015 | February 2017 |
| | U | SAFMC tilefish | Update | 2014 | April 2016 |
| | U | HMS dusky shark | Update | 2015 | July 2016 |
| | U | GMFMC gag grouper | Update | 2015 | January 2017 |
| | U | GMFMC greater amberjack | Update | 2015 | March 2017 |
| 2017 | 48 | FL FWC Southeastern US black grouper | Benchmark | 2015 | February 2018 |
| | 51 | GMFMC gray snapper | Benchmark | 2015 | April 2018 |
| | 52 | GMFMC red snapper | Standard | 2016 | March 2018 |
| | 54 | HMS sandbar shark | Standard | 2015 | January 2018 |
| | 55 | CFMC spiny lobster | Standard | 2015 | January 2018 |
| | 56 | SAFMC black sea bass | Standard | 2015 | October 2017 |
| | 57 | SAFMC vermilion snapper | Standard | 2016 | April 2018 |
| | R | SAFMC MRIP Catch Revisions | | 2016 | TBD |
| | R | GMFMC MRIP Catch Revisions | | 2016 | TBD |

SEDAR Methods and Procedures Workshops

| Number | Year | Topic |
|--------|------|---|
| 1 | 2008 | Indices Development and Evaluation |
| 2 | 2008 | Evaluating and Modeling Catchability |
| 3 | 2009 | Caribbean Data Review |
| 4 | 2010 | Evaluating Assessment Uncertainty |
| 5 | 2012 | GOM Episodic Events Workshop |
| 6 | 2014 | South Atlantic Shrimp Data Evaluation |
| 7 | 2015 | Best Practices, Data |
| . | 2017 | Stock ID and Meristics Workshop (Cancelled) |
| . | 2018 | Caribbean Data Review |
| . | 2018 | Shark Stock ID and Meristics |
| | | Best Practices, Assessment |



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24 March, 2017

TO: Gregg Waugh,
SAFMC Executive Director

FROM: Bonnie J. Ponwith, Ph.D.
Science and Research Director

SUBJECT: SAFMC Assessment and Related Requests

You noted the decision to postpone the MRIP revision assessments until after the third year of comparison data are available in your memo dated 22 March. This decision does, indeed, create an opportunity to consider other activities that are commensurate with that level of effort. Unfortunately, a Standard Assessment for Golden Tilefish is not a good fit for that window. That assessment would require a dedicated analyst for between six to nine months. After consulting with our age readers, we have also determined it would not be possible to have the otoliths ready in time to fit this window. Based on discussions at the last SAFMC meeting, I believe conducting a workshop that includes MRIP, SEFSC, SAFMC and GMFMC SSC representatives to begin the work on setting minimum standards for and improving the precision of MRIP catch estimates for management purposes would be a good fit in terms of priority and relative effort.

You requested that our analysts complete an evaluation to determine if the same challenges we encountered reading blueline tilefish carry over into our work on golden tilefish, and to have that analysis by April 21 for discussion at the SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting. We will be able to meet this request.

You also requested an analysis regarding our aging capacity in the South Atlantic, including the SEFSC and MARMAP partners, in time for the June 2017 briefing book deadline, including:

- Resources required to clear the current backlog of age evaluations
- Resources required to provide up-to-date structure evaluations for primary data collection species, and
- A comparison of the current capacity/resources relative to what it would take to stay up to date for those species.

We will be able to meet this request.

If you have questions or concerns, please to not hesitate to contact me.

cc: Monica Smit-Brunello
John McGovern, Rick DeVactor
Theo Brainerd, Trika Gerard, Peter Thompson,
Larry Massey, Erik Williams



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April 14, 2017

TO: Gregg Waugh.
SAFMC Executive Director

FROM: Bonnie J. Ponwith, Ph.D.
Science and Research Director

SUBJECT: SAFMC Assessment and Related Requests

On March 24, 2017, I responded to your request of March 22 titled, "SAFMC Assessment and Related Requests." In it I discussed the problem of scheduling a golden tilefish assessment, proposed having a workshop to set minimum standards for MRIP catch estimates, and agreed that the SEFSC and MARMAP have adequate aging capacity in the South Atlantic. The attached report addresses an additional concern: if challenges encountered in reading blue-line tilefish carry over into our work on golden tilefish. The attached report was prepared to address that issue.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

cc: Monica Smit-Brunello
John McGovern, Rick DeVactor
Theo Brainerd, Trika Gerard, Peter Thompson,
Erik Williams, Larry Massey

Ageing of Tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) in the Southeastern United States

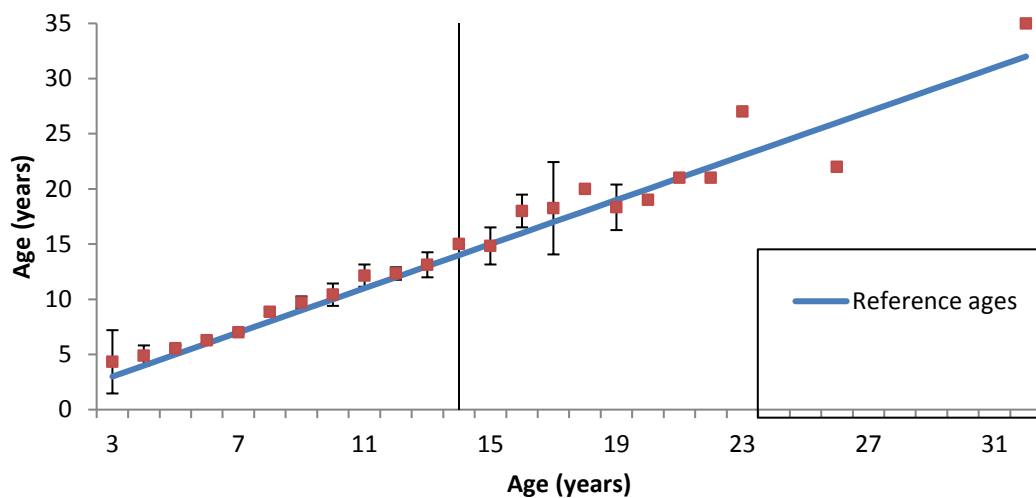
In the Southeastern U.S., the species of the deepwater complex are difficult to age with any consistency and work on validation of ages is in its infancy. Blueline tilefish (*Caulilatilus microps*) is a prime example of the difficulty in interpretation of the growth zones on the otoliths, and the challenges with techniques to validate the age readings. Tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) otoliths are also difficult to interpret, but have exhibited a relatively more consistent pattern of growth zones compared to other deepwater species.

In 2009, a tilefish age workshop was held with expert age readers from NMFS Beaufort, NMFS Panama City, SCDNR, and NMFS Woods Hole. Prior to this meeting, Linda Lombardi-Carlson of NMFS Panama City had completed a radiometric (lead-radium) age validation study of tilefish caught off the east coast of Florida (results published in Lombardi-Carlson and Allen, 2015). Her work involved identifying a consistent pattern of growth zones on the otolith sections to determine age and then comparing those age readings to the estimated ages from the lead-radium ratios. The age reading precision between two readers at Panama City was calculated as average percent error (APE) of 5.5%, which is very good for a long-lived species. She then compared those ages to results of lead-radium dating, and found that all age groups of females and the oldest age groups (unidentified sexes) were validated. The male ages were not validated. The results of her study were used during the workshop to aid in interpretation of the growth zones in the otoliths. Following the age workshop, reference sets were exchanged between laboratories. APEs from this exchange ranged from 6.0% to 9.8% between pairs of age readers. These results were deemed to be very good for long-lived fish with difficult to interpret otoliths. No bias in age readings was noted.

Prior to the 2016 update of SEDAR25 Tilefish assessment, the age readers will read reference sets to ensure that they are still reading the otoliths consistently. NMFS Beaufort re-read their own reference set and NMFS Panama City's tilefish reference set. The APEs were 4.4% and 5.7%, respectively, with no bias in readings (Figure 1). SCDNR follows a similar protocol to ensure their age readers are consistently assigning ages to the samples. They re-read their own reference set and have found comparable APEs to those NMFS Beaufort has achieved. These results have lead our labs to believe that our age readings are consistent between laboratories and over time.

In conclusion, both NMFS Beaufort and SCDNR feel that the age readings of tilefish are useable in stock assessments because of the consistency in age readings between laboratories and the published age validation paper.

a. NMFS Beaufort Reference set



b. NMFS Panama City reference set

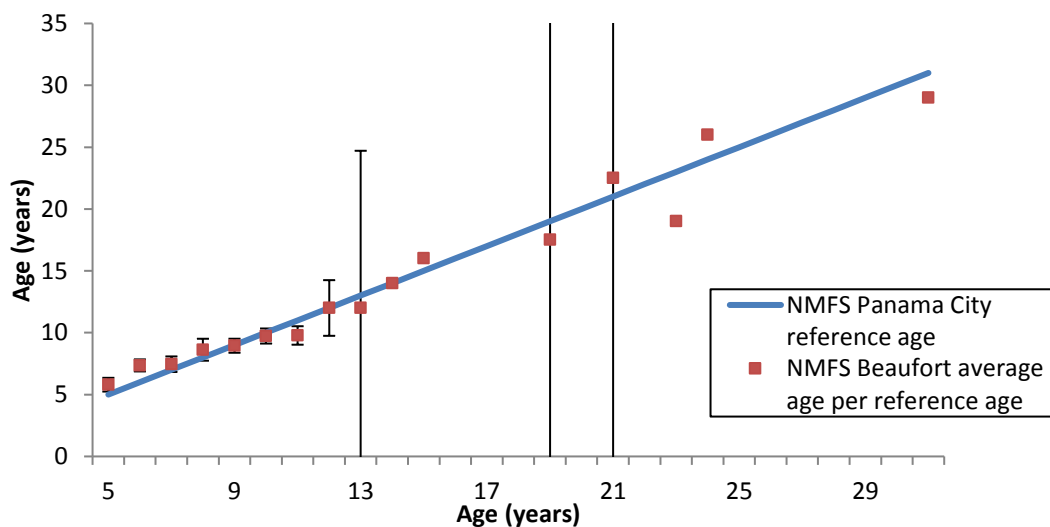


Figure 1. Tilefish age bias plots of NMFS Beaufort readings compared to reference ages of a) NMFS Beaufort reference set and b) NMFS Panama City reference set.