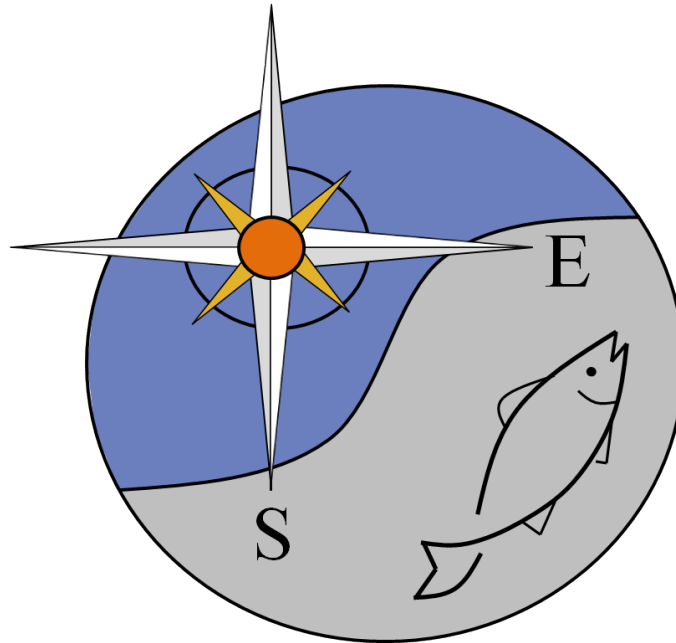


# SEDAR



**SEDAR Steering Committee**

**Meeting Brief**

**May 13, 2021**

**Meeting via Webinar**

Webinar link: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/4681161273771271184>

**Version: BB**

**4/27/2021**

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## **DOCUMENTS**

Attachment 1: October 2020 Draft Meeting Summary and Follow Up Document

Attachment 2: SEDAR Projects Update April 2021

Attachment 3: Research Track/Operational Assessment/Topical Working Group Guidance  
Document

Attachment 4: SEDAR Projects List

Attachment 5: Modifications to the Project Planning Grid from the October 2020 Steering  
Committee Summary and Follow-Up

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Documents

- Agenda
- Attachment 1. October 2020 Draft Meeting Summary

### 1.2 Action

- Introduction
- Review and Approve Agenda
- Approve Meeting Summary

## 2 SEDAR Projects Report

### 2.1 Documents

Attachment 2. SEDAR Projects Update April 2021

### 2.2 Summary

The projects report (Attachment 2) provides a summary of current and recently completed SEDAR assessment projects.

Highlighted project developments:

- SEDAR 71 -South Atlantic Gag Grouper: The lead analyst requested one additional assessment webinar to complete the project. The assessment was originally scheduled to be completed March 2021. It was completed in April 2021
- SEDAR 72 – Gulf of Mexico Gag Grouper: On 22 February 2021, the SEFCS informed the Council that they would need an additional 2 months to complete the assessment due to delays in data delivery. Assessment webinars are underway and should be completed by July 2021. The assessment is now scheduled to be completed in September 2021.
- SEDAR 80 - Caribbean Queen Triggerfish: A Life History TWG Data Scoping webinar was held 10 February 2021, where the group was informed that the ageing data is not yet complete and would not be available until 30 September 2021. As this data is a critical touch point for the assessment, this delay has required a shift in the overall project schedule by ~7 months. The assessment is now expected to be completed April 2022.
- COVID-19 Impacts to ongoing projects:
  - SEDAR 68 Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Scamp: This assessment continues to be impacted by delays due to COVID-19. The need to postpone the completion of the data process until December 2020 translated into an extension of assessment schedule, now slated to be completed in August 2021. The Review Workshop will be held August 31<sup>st</sup> – Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. Given that NOAA currently has concerns regarding staff's ability to travel through the remainder of the fiscal year, the SEFSC requested that the Review Workshop be held virtually, for which plans are underway.

- Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Assessment Process: The SEFSC will provide an update on the impacts COVID-19 has had on this process during the Schedule Review.

### 2.3 Action

- Informational; none required

## 3 SEDAR Process Review and Discussion

### 3.1 Documents

Attachment 3. Research Track/Operational Assessment/Topical Working Group Guidance Document

### 3.2 Summary

During the October 2020 SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting, the Committee reviewed a document that summarized the process for the integration of the Topical Working Group Approach. The Committee continued to have some questions on the use of TWGs, as well as a few components of the Research Track and Operational Assessments.

SEDAR Staff worked with Chair Porch to produce and refine a single guidance document that covers those topics. That document can be found in Attachment 3.

### 3.3 Action

- Review the Guidance document and provide feedback

## 4 Assessment Schedule Review

### 4.1 Documents

Attachment 4. SEDAR Projects List

Attachment 5. Modifications to the Project Planning Grid from the October 2020 Steering Committee report

### 4.2 Summary

- During the Master Scheduling meeting with SEDAR and SESFC for 2022, the S68 Operational Assessments were tentatively scheduled to begin in January 2022. That timing was dependent on the assessment being completed in June of 2021. Given that the assessment will now be completed in October 2021, the timing of the OAs will need to be revisited during the next scheduling call.
- The SEFSC will provide an update to the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Assessment Process, including information on timing of the SEDAR component of the process.

- The Committee is asked to review and finalize the project schedule for 2023 and provide priorities for 2024 and beyond.

#### 4.3 Action

- Consider any needed modifications to the 2023 Projects
- Review 2024 Priorities
- Consider long-term priorities (2025/2026)

## 5 Other Business

- SEFSC Reorganization and Data Improvement Update

Chair Porch will provide the Committee an update on the ongoing reorganization and data improvements underway at the SEFSC.

- SEDAR 2020 Carryover and Budget Outlook

SEDAR began a new 5-year grant cycle in 2020. Due to the global pandemic, most of the scheduled in-person SEDAR meetings for 2020 and Spring 2021 were changed to be held virtually. As such, there are some unspent travel funds from 2020, and potentially from 2021, available for use during the 5-year cycle. SEDAR Staff have discussed options with the SEFSC on ways those funds may be used moving forward. The following suggestions have been put forward:

- 1) Reserve some of the funds to guard against potential funding cuts in the remaining years of the grant cycle. The SEFSC received a significant cut to its funding this year, and it is uncertain if further cuts in the NMFS budget may be coming.
- 2) Reserve a portion of the funds to support current operational levels in the future. SEDAR has been level-funded for the last 6 years, while the costs for travel and meeting expenses continue to rise.
- 3) Fund Procedural and Special Topics Workshops, such as the one currently underway looking at fishery-independent indices development. While there are several topics identified for future workshops, until this year none had been held since 2015, in large part due to the lack of funding to convene one.
- 4) Allocate some funds to support contracting individuals to facilitate or chair procedural and special topics workshops. Identifying and securing qualified chairs for various SEDAR special projects continues to be an issue. Contracting with outside experts may be a solution.

- Update on Fishery- Independent Indices Procedural Workshop In-Person workshop options

Due to the current concerns that NOAA has regarding SEFSC staff's ability to travel through the remainder of the fiscal year, the SEFSC requested that SEDAR consider options for the scheduled September 2021 in-person procedural workshop.

SEDAR Staff convened the Steering Committee for PW08 to gather feedback on possible approaches to the September workshop, if NOAA staff were not able to attend the in-person meeting. Overall, the Committee felt an in-person workshop was critical to the success of this process. The nature of these meetings requires personal interactions and complex discussions that are incredibly difficult in a virtual process.

The Committee came up with the following options, ranked by preference:

- 1) Hold the in-person workshop in September as scheduled: If only a few SEFSC personnel are not able to attend, the Committee would prefer to move forward with the current schedule. Those not in attendance could participate in all other virtual stages of the process, and possibly call in via phone for specific discussions.
- 2) Postpone the in-person meeting until all participants would be allowed to attend. This would likely move the meeting until January 2022 and would put a time crunch on the development of advice for the upcoming S74 Gulf of Mexico red snapper RT, though it could still be accommodated.
- 3) All Virtual: Everyone attends from their own location. The Committee felt this format will decrease efficiency and did not believe that this approach would produce as much advice as holding an in-person workshop.
- 4) Hybrid Meeting: One group of participants “in person” and another group on the webinar. The Committee felt this would be the most difficult approach to navigate, feeling that this approach creates unequal footing between participants, and often causes disruptions to discussions.

The Committee is asked to discuss the feedback provided and recommend a path forward.

- Discussion on Resumption of In-person SEDAR Meetings

SEDAR had to modify the bulk of its 2020 and early 2021 in-person meetings to a virtual format due to the global pandemic and restricted travel guidance. With vaccine availability becoming widespread, SEDAR staff are planning for the resumption of in-person assessment meetings starting in Fall 2021. Three large data workshops are currently on the schedule:

S74 – Gulf Red Snapper DW, November 1-5 in New Orleans, LA

S77 – HMS Hammerhead Sharks DW, December 13-17 in Charleston, SC

S79 – SE Mutton Snapper DW, January 31- February 4, 2022 in Saint Petersburg, FL

The feedback staff has received from informal discussions is that most participants are very eager to return to in-person meetings, and seem to have no concerns with gathering, given the status of the wide-spread availability of vaccines and that these meetings are still several months away.

Travel restrictions are still in place for certain agencies, with NMFS being the largest component of SEDAR participants still under a very restrictive travel ban.

The Committee is asked to discuss thoughts or concerns regarding the resumption of in-person meeting for SEDAR assessments.

### 5.1 Action

- Provide recommendations regarding the Indices Procedural Workshop in September 2021
- Provide guidance regarding the resumption of in-person meetings

## 6 Next Meeting

The Committee is asked to make scheduling recommendations and suggest topics for the next meeting. Based on past practices, the next meeting would be a webinar-based meeting in October 2021.

Table 1: SEDAR Project Planning Grid – May 2021 SEDAR Steering Committee Discussion Draft

Table Color Legend:

Steering Committee Approved and SEFSC Scheduled Projects								FUTURE Requests											
Steering Committee Approved, PENDING SEFSC SCHEDULING								2023 Preliminary Projects - Finalized This Meeting											
SEDAR SCHEDULE OVERVIEW – May 2021 SEDAR Steering Committee Discussion																			
YEAR	SA Team				Gulf Team				Caribbean Team	HMS Team		FL FWCC	ASMFC GSMFC	CMP/ Shrimp					
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		1	2								
2021	Scamp RT	Red Snapper OA	Gag Grouper OA	Tilefish OA	Scamp RT	Gag Grouper OA	Red Snapper RT	Red Snapper RT	Queen Trigger PR-STX-STT OA	Hammerheads RT		Mutton Snapper Bench	Gulf Menhaden OA						
2022			Spanish Mackerel OA															ASFMC Menhaden OA	
	Scamp OA	Gray Triggerfish RT	Black Sea Bass OA		Scamp OA	Gray Snapper OA													Gulf Spanish OA
2023	Vermilion OA			Red Grouper OA	Yellowedge OA		Red Snapper OA	Red Snapper OA	Queen snap@PR, redtail parrot@STX								Gulf Shrimp		
2024	White Grunt RT			Blueline Tilefish OA	Lane Snapper OA?	Gray Triggerfish RT	Tilefish Complex OA?	Vermilion OA	Lane@PR,, YTS			Hogfish Bench	ASFMC Red Drum (RW)/ Gulf Menhaden OA						
2025											Caribbean Hogfish			Black Grouper Bench?					
2026																			

Timing of projects shown in this table is approximate and is intended for SEDAR Steering Committee workload planning purposes only. Please consult individual project schedules for specific start and end dates.