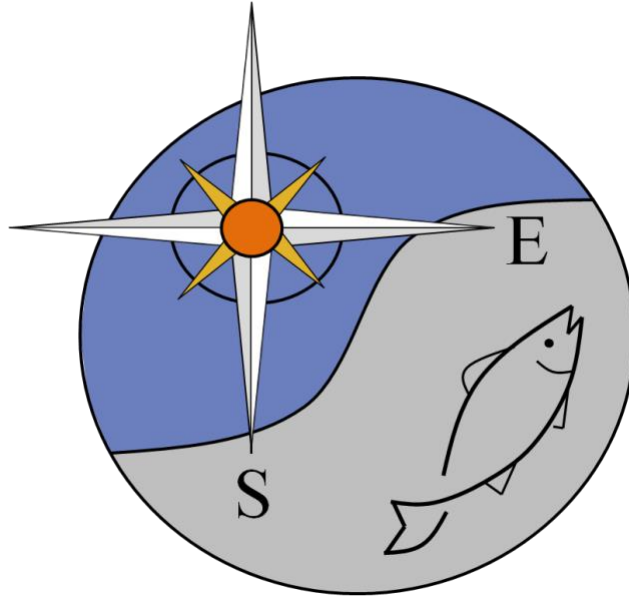


SEDAR



SEDAR Steering Committee

Meeting Summary

DRAFT

May 9, 2022

Meeting via Webinar

Report Content Note:

To provide context for recommendations and maintain the full record, this document combines the briefing summary provided to the Committee for consideration during the meeting as well as summary Committee discussion points and recommendations.

Outcomes from the meeting are found under the section headers “Meeting Outcome”.

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6/16/2022

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Attachment 6: Modifications to the Project Planning Grid from the October 2021 Steering
Committee Summary

Attachment 7: Statements of Work (Cooperator Requests and SEFSC Responses)

Attendance

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Clay Porch, Chair, SEFSC
John Carmichael, SAFMC
Mel Bell, SAFMC
Carrie Simmons, GMFMC
Dale Diaz, GMFMC

Karyl Brewster-Geisz, HMS
Marcos Hanke, CFMC
Andy Strelcheck, SERO
Steve Vanderkooy, GSMFC
Pat Campfield, ASMFC

SEDAR STAFF

Julie A. Neer

Kathleen Howington

WEBINAR OBSERVERS

Luiz Barbieri, FWC/FWRI
Carolyn Belcher, GA DNR, SAFMC
Julia Byrd, SAFMC Staff
Shannon Cass-Calay, SEFSC
Chip Collier, SAFMC Staff
Nancie Cummings, SEFSC
Judd Curtis, SAFMC Staff
Eric Fitzpatrick, SEFSC
Emilie Franke, ASFMC
John Froeschke, GMFMC Staff
Graciela Garcia-Moliner, CFMC Staff

Bob Gill, GMFMC
Vivian Matter, SEFSC
Matthew Nuttall, SEFSC
Ryan Rindone, GMFMC Staff
Skyler Sagarese, SEFSC
Mike Schmidtke, SAFMC Staff
Virginia Shervette, USC
Katie Siegfried, SEFSC
Greg Stunz, TAMUCC, GMFMC
Erik Williams, SEFSC

Meeting Outcomes Summary

This Meeting Outcomes Summary highlights the major decisions of the Committee during the meeting. Additional details can be found under the heading “Meeting Outcome” for each relevant section and are italicized throughout the report.

Introduction

The Committee got an update about the issue of assessment data inputs not being delivered by the deadlines. The SEFSC indicated that if they are informed that data sets will be late, they would reach out to the relevant Cooperators so that they may aid in outreach to get the data. Additionally, the SEFSC will come up with a set of criteria to determine which data will be necessary to wait for and what data the assessment can move forward without.

SEDAR Projects Report

The Committee discussed the Terminal Year for the postponed SEDAR 79 SE Mutton Snapper. The State of Florida is planning on a TY of 2022. The SEFSC agreed they could provide data through 2021. It was noted that changes in schedules need to be discussed by all Cooperators.

SEDAR Process Review and Discussion**Topical Working Groups (TWGs) Update**

The Committee received a report on how TWGs have been functioning. Chair Porch stated that the goal should be to minimize TWGs for any given assessment. The Center will let the Cooperators know the impact of adding TWGs on the time to complete the assessment and the number of assessments that can be done when they review the SoWs.

Chair Porch stated that a TWG should be formed primarily to address outstanding issues not previously handled by the analyst or which are beyond the SSC's capacity to review when the OA is brought to them for consideration. The Committee expressed concern with this suggested approach.

The issue of participants of the TWGs needing to be appointed was discussed. For someone to participate in both the publicly noticed and non-noticed TWG discussions, they must be appointed by a Cooperator. Chair Porch will continue discussions with NOAA General Counsel to ensure SEDAR is following the policy correctly.

Research Track Technical Chair Discussion

The Committee discussed the continued difficulty in identifying someone to serve as the technical Chair for the Data and Assessment portions of the Research Track Assessments. Moving forward, SEDAR Coordinators will chair the Data and Assessment portions of the RTs. It was also agreed that if a Cooperator feels the need to find an outside individual to chair part or all of a specific RT, that option will exist.

Discussion of the Role of SEDAR in Management Procedures (MPs)/Management Strategy Evaluations (MSEs)

The assessment process continues to get more complicated. The Center believes this is largely due to the increasing number data sets and partners that are being included. To increase the number of assessments that can be produced, it is necessary to look at other options such as simpler assessment models, use of interim analyses between assessments, and Management Procedures (MPs) with empirical harvest control rules.

SEDAR should have a role when MSEs are conducted to vet MPs with empirical harvest control rules. Any new tool that being developed or applied for the first time to provide the scientific information needed by the SSC to recommend a catch level should be reviewed through the SEDAR or equivalent review process. The SEDAR Peer Review process is the preferred approach for reviewing first applications of a tool (MSEs, MPs).

Assessment Schedule Review**South Atlantic Personnel Update**

The SEFSC informed the Committee that two of the analysts previously tasked with South Atlantic assessments have moved on to other roles within the Center. The Center noted that they

could still produce OAs for SA Red Grouper and Scamp, and the Research Track for Gray Triggerfish, scheduled for 2023 but the Vermilion OA would not be possible. They suggested they could update the indices for Vermilion as a health check, then work with the SAFMC SSC on producing an interim analysis for Vermilion, using SEFIS as the indicator index.

Cooperator Discussions (2024 and beyond)

Chair Porch noted that the schedule for 2024 is not yet final and approved. It is possible that all the assessments requested cannot be accomplished once the Scheduling Call is held. There was some confusion regarding this comment and the role of SoWs in the process if they don't allow for the finalization of the schedule during the Spring Steering Committee meeting, as has been the case in the past, and as intended by the current process. It was noted that if any issues arise at the Scheduling Call, then the scheduling process may need to be halted until the affected Cooperator can weigh in on the possible changes in timing, species, or assessment content.

Summary of Requests for 2025 Operational Assessments:

Requested Cooperators provide Scopes of Work for 2025 operational assessments to the SEFSC by November 1st, 2022. The SEFSC will provide feedback to the Cooperators by February 1st, 2023. These projects will be considered for approval at the Spring 2023 meeting.

- *SAFMC: Gag Grouper, Atlantic Migratory Cobia, Red Porgy, King Mackerel*
- *GMFMC: Gag Grouper, Lane Snapper, King Mackerel*
- *CFMC: Hogfish (this species may change)*

Other Business

SEFSC Updates

Center Data Improvement Project: *Work continues on the Data Warehouse, where all the data will be more available to the data users, and in the future to the public once the confidentiality issues are handled. Additionally, the Center is working on the development of indices of abundance from all the survey data that will be available to the public.*

MRIP-SEFSC Catch-Weight Estimation Discrepancy: *The SEFSC plans to set up a working group with the NOAA Fisheries' MRIP program and Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) to develop Best Practices to handle this issue.*

Progress of MRIP Transition Team Report from Office of S&T: *The report from the February 2022 workshop is still being developed.*

NMFS White Paper Revisions and Timing: *The current plan is to add an addendum to the July 2019 report documenting the recommendations from the Transition team. It was suggested that a new updated document might be helpful, to ensure everyone is using the most current report. Chair Porch stated that he would raise this issue with his colleagues at S&T, as they were the authors of the original report.*

Status of SRFS calibration for use in alternative SEDAR 72 (Gag Grouper) run: *It appears that everything is on track to have the review of the SRFS data completed by the S&T contractors by the May 28 deadline as scheduled. If there are no recommended changes, then the SEFSC will commence the assessment using the SRFS data (rather than the MRIP time series) and provide it to the GMFMC for review by the Gulf SSC at its July 2022 meeting.*

Currency of the recreational data for SEDAR 74 (red snapper):

The Transition Team recommended using the MRIP FES currency for the RT assessment, and any estimates for management purposes would be calibrated to the State currency for monitoring purposes.

The Gulf Council's expectation is that the all the State calibrations will be completed in time for the OA.

The Committee agreed to the following:

Consensus Statement: *The SEDAR Steering Committee requests NOAA Office of Science and Technology and the Gulf States work expediently to calibrate and approve the Red Snapper recreational historical landings time series for use in the SEDAR 74 Red Snapper Operational Assessment.*

Terminal Year of Data to Assessment Completion Discussion

The current system has not realized the expected increase in throughput owing to the increasing number of data sets and partners involved. Post-assessment analyses are also continuing to take more time, along with other Cooperator requests.

Interim analyses can provide information to adjust management advice more quickly once an assessment is complete and there is an indicator that tracks the stock well.

While there is considerable flexibility in how OAs are configured, throughput can be increased if changes and modifications to OAs are limited, and OAs are developed similar to previous assessment updates.

The Councils are more concerned about the increasing lag between the terminal year of data and delivery of the assessment to the SSC for review (regularly 3-4 years currently) than with increasing the number of assessments produced.

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

The Committee received an update on the new dates for the in-person workshop and were informed how difficult it has been for the data providers to dedicate time to work on this due to the workload issues associated with the other SEDAR assessments underway, and other job-related activities.

SEDAR Website Transition Update

The Committee received an update on the transition of the SEDAR website to a new platform.

SOPPs Development and Review Plan

The Committee had no comments on this item. SEDAR Staff will move forward on preparing updated SOPPs sections for review at the Fall 2022 Steering Committee meeting.

BSIA Regional Plan

The Cooperators noted they wish they had more time to contribute to the BSIA Southeast Regional Plan development. The Steering Committee may be a way to bring issues before this group to begin discussions for developing future regional plans and policies.

It was also noted that there were a few technical details regarding SEDAR in the draft plan that need to be corrected. Since SEDAR was not asked specifically to comment on the policy, SEDAR Staff will work with the SA Cooperator to get those modifications to the Regional Office.

Table 1: SEDAR Project Planning Grid – May 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting Outcome

Table Color Legend:

Steering Committee Approved and SEFSC Scheduled Projects										FUTURE Requests								
Steering Committee Approved, PENDING SEFSC SCHEDULING										2024 Preliminary Projects – To Be Finalized at the Spring 2022 Meeting								
SEDAR SCHEDULE OVERVIEW – May 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee Discussion																		
YEAR	SA Team					Gulf Team					Caribbean Team	HMS Team		FL FWCC	Menhaden/ RW only	CMP		
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	1	2					
2022	Scamp OA		Spanish Mackerel OA		Analyst in Training	Scamp OA	Gray Snapper OA	Red Snapper RT	Red Snapper RT		Queen Trigger PR-STX-STT OA	Hammerheads RT			ASFMC Menhaden OA			
2023		Gray Triggerfish RT	Black Sea Bass OA			Yellowedge Grouper OA				Gulf Spanish Mackerel OA								
			Red Grouper OA							Yellowtail (PR); Stoplight Parrotfish (USVI)								
								Red Snapper OA	Red Snapper OA									
2024	Red snapper RT	Grey Triggerfish OA	Tilefish OA	Blueline Tilefish OA		Red Grouper OA	Gray Triggerfish RT	Cobia OA	Vermillion OA	Gulf Shrimp RT	Spiny Lobster OA (all islands)				ASFMC Red Drum (RW)			
2025		Gag Grouper OA	Atlantic Migratory Cobia OA	Red Porgy OA		GAJ RT			Lane Snapper OA		Gag Grouper OA		Hogfish (PR) Lane Snapper?	Bull, Spinner, Tiger, Finetooth Sharks RT		Hogfish Bench	Gulf Menhaden OA	King Mackerel OA (SA & Gulf)
2026	Red Snapper OA	GAJ RT	Snowy Grouper OA	Dolphin (MP?)			Gray Triggerfish OA	Tilefish Complex (MP?)	Scamp OA		Queen Snapper	Bull, Spinner, Tiger, Finetooth Sharks OA		Black Grouper Bench/MP?				
2027	Vermilion OA																	
				White Grunt RT														
2028																		

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.

1 Introduction

1.1 Documents

- Agenda
- Attachment 1. October 2021 Draft Meeting Summary

1.2 Action

- Introduction
- Review and Approve Agenda
- Approve Meeting Summary

MEETING OUTCOME

The Committee made an addition to the agenda, adding a discussion of the BSIA Regional Framework under Other Business, and approved the October 2021 Draft Meeting Summary v.5 (11/18/2021).

The Committee got an update about the issue of assessment data inputs not being delivered by the deadlines. The SEFSC indicated that if they are informed that data sets will be late, they would reach out to the relevant Cooperators so that they may aid in outreach to get the data. Additionally, the SEFSC will come up with a set of criteria to determine which data will be necessary to wait for and what data the assessment can move forward without.

- *May have to leave the decision to delay an assessment up to the analytic team, as they will be best suited to know if the missing data is critical for that particular assessment.*
- *Very difficult to put hard and fast rules in place.*
- *Decision criteria may be based on “data types” rather than specific data sets. The Center will work with ASMFC and FWC to come up with a list for review at the Fall Steering Committee meeting.*

2 SEDAR Projects Report

2.1 Documents

Attachment 2. SEDAR Projects Update April 2022

2.2 Summary

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

Highlighted project developments:

SEDAR 79 – SE US Mutton Snapper: Data Scoping was held in August 2021, with a Data Workshop scheduled for January 31-February 4, 2022. Due to ongoing

uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, and the request from the SAFMC and GMFMC to prioritize a Yellowtail Snapper update, the early 2022 Data Workshop was postponed.

The State of Florida has decided to halt the work on SEDAR 79 SE US Mutton Snapper for 2022. The plan is to begin the assessment in early 2023, with a Data workshop to be held in Summer 2023.

2.3 Action

- Informational; none required

MEETING OUTCOME

The Committee discussed the Terminal Year for the postponed SEDAR 79 SE Mutton Snapper. The State of Florida is planning on a TY of 2022, as the Data Workshop is scheduled for Summer 2023. The FWC offered to work with the SEFSC to aid with data provisioning. The SEFSC agreed they could provide data through 2021. It was noted that changes in schedules need to be discussed by all Cooperators.

3 SEDAR Process Review and Discussion

3.1 Documents

Attachment 3. Operational Assessments Topical Working Groups Process Summary

Attachment 4: Research Track/Operational Assessment/Topical Working Group Guidance Document

3.2 Summary

- Topical Working Groups Update

Several Operational Assessments with Topical Working Groups (TWGs) have now been completed or are underway. The switch from Assessment Panels to TWGs initially caused some confusion regarding process and procedures. To help clarify the process, SEDAR Staff produced a TWG Process Summary page (Attachment 3) which highlights the main points. The detailed process description can be found in the Research Track/Operational Assessment/Topical Working Group Guidance Document (Attachment 4).

- Research Track Technical Chair Discussion

During the May 2021 SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting, the Committee discussed Technical Chairs for Research Tracks Assessments:

“Difficulty in Identifying Chairs for Research Track Assessments:

It was noted that it continues to be difficult to identify qualified individuals willing to serve as Chairs during the Data and Assessment portions of the RTs. While the lead agency is responsible for appointing a Chair, it will be necessary for all parties involved to work together to find appropriate individuals to serve. This remains an ongoing issue that everyone will need to continue to work on resolving.”

This issue continues to exist. Chair Porch will discuss the option of shifting the responsibility of appointing the Technical Chair from the lead analytic agency to the Cooperator for an individual Research Track assessment.

From the Research Track Guidance Document:

“Technical Chair: Scientist appointed by lead analytic agency who would ideally serve as Chair for both Data and Assessment stages. The technical chair is not a member of the ADT and need not come from the lead analytic agency. “

- Discussion of the Role of SEDAR in Management Procedures/Management Strategy Evaluations

During several recent Council meetings, SEFCS Representatives have mentioned the possibility of using a Management Procedure as an alternative approach to traditional stock assessments to provide management advice. This potential new approach and what role, if any SEDAR, may have in these, needs to be defined.

Management procedures (MP) refers to the entire process of developing scientific advice from fisheries data, and then implementing it as fisheries management actions. The production of the actual management advice would be akin to the interim analyses which in practice would be done outside the SEDAR process. However, the stakeholder interactions and model development for the simulation tests needed to develop and test the performance of candidate MPs (known as Management Strategy Evaluations) could be very well served by the SEDAR process.

These alternative approaches may allow a shift from the current practice of trying to stitch together every piece of information, which is expensive and time consuming, to rely instead on the most accurate and timely information.

3.3 Action

- Discussion of the Research Track and Operational Assessment Process to determine if changes to the process need to be considered.
 - Technical Chair Appointments
 - Role of SEDAR in Management Procedures/Management Strategy Evaluations

MEETING OUTCOME

- Topical Working Groups Update

The Committee received a report on how TWGs have been functioning. Chair Porch stated that the goal should be to minimize TWGs for any given assessment. The Center will let the Cooperators know the impact of adding TWGs on the time to complete the assessment and the number of assessments that can be done when they review the SoWs.

Chair Porch stated that a TWG should be formed primarily to address outstanding issues not previously handled by the analyst or which are beyond the SSC's capacity to review when the OA is brought to them for consideration. The Committee expressed concern with this suggested approach. It was noted that assuming an issue could be handled by the SSC at the review stage could lead to delays when it is determined that the SSC is unable to make decisions based on the information provided and requests additional analysis. These delays may have been avoided if the TWG was held during the development of the OA. The assumption that OAs should not routinely have TWGs also generated much discussion among the Committee.

The issue of participants of the TWGs needing to be appointed was discussed. For someone to participate in both the publicly noticed and non-noticed TWG discussions, they must be appointed by a Cooperator. That is the guidance that NOAA General Counsel provided to SEDAR when this approach was being considered for SEDAR assessments to ensure the process is following the FACA guidelines. It was noted that it is not just what decisions were made but also who was involved in those decisions and why were they involved in that part of the process. The appointment process allows the Administrative Record to document the participants in case questions arise. Chair Porch will continue discussions with NOAA General Council to ensure SEDAR is following the policy as intended.

Topical Working Groups are focused on narrow topics by design and it is hoped that anyone critical to the discussion would be appointed to participate fully in the TWG. Any Cooperator can appoint anyone to participate and there are no restrictions on the type of individuals certain Cooperators can appoint. The appointment process differs among the Cooperators, but in general, are very flexible and efficient. The goal is to appoint individuals who will be beneficial to the TWG process.

- Research Track Technical Chair Discussion

The Committee discussed the continued difficulty in identifying someone to serve as the technical Chair for the Data and Assessment portions of the Research track Assessments. Chair Porch suggested that the responsibility of identifying a Technical Chair be shifted from the lead analytic agency to the Cooperator for the given assessment. The Cooperators did not feel this would solve the issue, stating that their technical representatives are already overworked. It was also noted that it was not a wise use of SEDAR funds to hire a technical chair. Moving forward, SEDAR Coordinators will chair the Data and Assessment portions of the RTs. They were already chairing the Stock ID processes of the RTs if they existed. The Review Workshop Chair will continue to be appointed from the Cooperator's technical body. It was also agreed that if a Cooperator feels the need to find an outside individual to chair part or all of a specific RT, that option will exist.

SEDAR Staff will develop a guidance document on the responsibilities of a Chair for the Committee to review at the Fall 2022 meeting.

- Discussion of the Role of SEDAR in Management Procedures/Management Strategy Evaluations

The assessment process continues to get more complicated. The Center believes this is largely due to the increasing number data sets and partners that are being included. To increase the number of assessments that can be produced, it is necessary to look at other options such as simpler assessment models, use of interim analyses between assessments, and Management Procedures (MPs) with empirical harvest control rules.

Interim analyses adjust the OFL and ABC derived from the most recent assessment based on subsequent trends of an indicator of stock size, preferably a fishery-independent index of stock abundance. In cases where the data are insufficient to develop an assessment-based OFL and ABC, it may still be possible to develop MPs that employ empirical Harvest Control Rules that will allow for the determination and adjustment of catch levels based on indices of abundance or other indicators such as the mean weight of the catch. In such cases, the preferred approach is to test candidate Management Procedures in a simulation environment to evaluate their ability to achieve management objectives (a process referred to as Management Strategy Evaluation, MSE). Candidate MPS that perform best in the simulation environment are then assumed likely to perform best in real world applications.

Interim analyses should remain external to the SEDAR process and remain a negotiation between the Center and the Cooperator. If interim analyses are going to be a fundamental part of the way management advice is provided once a RT is complete, then discussions regarding the nature of future interim analyses for a stock could be part of the SSC's review of the RT.

SEDAR should have a role when MSEs are conducted to vet MPs with empirical harvest control rules. Any new tool that being developed or applied for the first time to provide the scientific information needed by the SSC to recommend a catch level should be reviewed through the SEDAR or equivalent review process. The SEDAR Peer Review process is the preferred approach for reviewing first applications of a tool (MSEs, MPs).

A data triage would be the first step for determining which stocks may be amenable to using an alternative approach to provide advice. The Center will work with Cooperator Staff to develop a list of stocks or stock complexes that should be considered for candidate MPs.

The Gulf Cooperators were thankful for the interim analysis approach. That process, using a representative fishery-independent index as an indicator, has provided information for several Gulf of Mexico stocks and they remain hopeful the Management Procedures/Management Strategy Evaluation approach will be productive.

The Committee requested that the Center produce a document outlining what the Center envisions as the path forward, specifically the role of SEDAR in the process, and including the separate roles of SEDAR, the SSCs, and the Cooperators. The document should be provided for the Fall 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee meeting.

4 Assessment Schedule Review

4.1 Documents

Attachment 5. SEDAR Projects List

Attachment 6. Modifications to the Project Planning Grid from the October 2021 Steering Committee report

Attachment 7: Statements of Work (Cooperator Requests and SEFSC Responses)

4.2 Summary

- There was no need to hold an additional Master Scheduling meeting with SEDAR and SESFC since the last Steering Committee meeting in October 2021 as all assessments identified by the Steering Committee to be held in 2023 were successfully added to the schedule during the call in Summer 2021.
- SAFMC Schedule Request: The SAFMC requests that an Atlantic Cobia Operational Assessment (OA) be prioritized to begin in 2025. This will require the Snowy Grouper OA be postponed until 2026. The White Grunt Research Track Assessment request has been removed and a Dolphin assessment is to be considered for 2026.
- The State of Florida has decided to halt the work on SEDAR 79 SE US Mutton Snapper for 2022. The plan is to begin the assessment in early 2023, with a Data workshop to be held in Summer 2023.
- The Committee is asked to finalize the project schedule for 2024 and provide priorities for 2025 and beyond.

4.3 Action

- Consider any needed modifications to the 2024 Projects
- Review 2025 Priorities
- Consider long-term priorities (2026/2027)

MEETING OUTCOME

South Atlantic Personnel Update

The SEFSC informed the Committee that two of the analysts previously tasked with South Atlantic assessments have moved on to other roles within the Center. This will cause a change in the assessment schedule for South Atlantic. The Center noted that they could still produce OAs for SA Red Grouper and Scamp, and the Research Track for Gray Triggerfish, scheduled for 2023 but the Vermilion OA would not be possible. They suggested they could update the indices for Vermilion as a health check, then work with the SAFMC SSC on producing an interim analysis for Vermilion, using SEFIS as the indicator index. The timing of the Vermilion interim assessment will need to be discussed to ensure it works with the SSC meeting schedule.

Cooperator Discussions (2024 and beyond)

SAFMC - The 2024 requests were tentatively approved for scheduling:

- *Red Snapper RT, Gray Triggerfish OA (following RT), Tilefish, and Blueline Tilefish OAs*
- *Future 2025 requests: Gag Grouper, Atlantic migratory Cobia, and Red Porgy OAs*

It was noted that it might be a good idea to look at Dolphin in the Caribbean while it is being considered in the South Atlantic. Additional discussions will be needed.

GMFMC - The 2024 requests were tentatively approved for scheduling:

- *Gray Triggerfish RT, Red Grouper, Cobia, and Vermilion OAs*
- *Future 2025 requests: Greater Amberjack RT, Gag Grouper, Lane Snapper, and Red Grouper OAs*

The Committee received a brief update on the timing for the 2023 Gulf Shrimp Research Track assessment.

CFMC - The 2024 requests were tentatively approved for scheduling:

- *Spiny Lobster OAs – all islands*
- *Future 2025 requests: Caribbean Hogfish (perhaps for only one island), possibly Lane Snapper; more details to be provided at the Fall 2022 meeting*

It was noted that it might be a good idea to look at Dolphin in the Caribbean while it is being considered in the South Atlantic. Additional discussions will be needed.

HMS - The 2024 requests were tentatively approved for scheduling:

- *Bull, Spinner, Tiger, and Finetooth Shark RT*
- *Future 2025 request: continuing the 2024 RT*

The Center noted that the four species may prove to be too many, depending on that data available for each species.

Florida - The 2024 request was tentatively approved for scheduling:

- *SE Hogfish benchmark*
- *Future 2025 request: Black Grouper (benchmark or MP)*

The Center stated that it could provide data through 2021 for the S79 Mutton Snapper benchmark in 2023. The FWC and the Center will discuss the possibility of including 2022 data.

The Black Grouper benchmark proposed for 2026 still requires further discussion between the FWC and the SEFSC. The species ID issue needs to be resolved, and alternative assessment approaches may prove useful to examine.

ASMFC – SEDAR will be providing a Review Workshop for Red Drum in the first half of 2024.

- *Future 2025 request: Atlantic Menhaden RW Only (late 2025)*

GSMFC –

- *2024 Gulf Menhaden – no SEDAR component*

CMP –

- *Future 2025 request: Gulf and SA King Mackerel OA*

There was some discussion regarding moving the King Mackerel assessment up to 2024, but it was noted that the tentative schedule for 2024 was already very full. Additionally, it was noted that there are no approved-SoWs for those assessments. The Center was not optimistic that it can be moved to 2024.

Chair Porch noted that the schedule for 2024 is not yet final and approved. It is possible that all the assessments requested cannot be accomplished once the Scheduling Call is held. There was some confusion regarding this comment and the role of SoWs in the process if they don't allow for the finalization of the schedule during the Spring Steering Committee meeting, as has been the case in the past, and as intended by the current process. It was noted that if any issues arise at the Scheduling Call, then the scheduling process may need to be halted until the affected Cooperator can weigh in on the possible changes in timing, species, or assessment content.

Summary of Requests for 2025 Operational Assessments:

Requested Cooperators provide Scopes of Work for 2025 operational assessments to the SEFSC by November 1st, 2022. The SEFSC will provide feedback to the Cooperators by February 1st, 2023. These projects will be considered for approval at the Spring 2023 meeting.

- *SAFMC: Gag Grouper, Atlantic Migratory Cobia, Red Porgy, King mackerel*
- *GMFMC: Gag Grouper, Lane Snapper, King mackerel*
- *CFMC: Hogfish (this species may change)*

5 Other Business

- **Southeast Fisheries Science Center Updates:**

Chair Porch will provide the Committee an update on the following topics:

- Center Data Improvement Project
- Progress on Resolving the MRIP-SEFSC Catch-Weight Estimation Discrepancy
- Progress of the MRIP Transition Team report from Office of S&T with respect to state survey data for private vessels and integration into the stock assessment process
- NMFS White Paper Revisions and Timing

- Status of the SRFS calibration for use in alternative SEDAR 72 run (gag grouper): Timing and potential impacts on other SEDAR Assessments
- Describe what currency the recreational data will be in for SEDAR 74 (red snapper). Will the state surveys be integrated into the stock assessment? What is the process for conversion of projections from FES to state currencies for monitoring and management?
- Terminal Year of Data to Assessment Completion Discussion

Assessments are continuing to take more time from Data Scoping to assessment completion. Given this, the Terminal Year (TY) of a specific assessment is often two or more years old by the time the assessment is reviewed by the Cooperator's Technical bodies, and 3 or 4 years from the TY of the assessment to when the Cooperator's are implementing management advice. The Committee is asked to discuss ways to improve the timeliness of assessment availability, in relation to the Terminal Year of data included in the assessment.

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

The in-person workshop for PW08 was scheduled to be held April 2022. SEDAR Staff convened the Organizing Committee for this Process in February 2022 and the group determined that, due to ongoing uncertainties regarding the availability of Federal partners to travel, the in-person meeting be postponed again. The workshop will now be held November 2-4, 2022, in Tampa, Florida.

- SEDAR Website Transition Update

In December 2021, SEDAR Staff were informed by our current website support staff that the current website platform (Drupal 7) was going to lose technical support in November 2022, meaning that the SEDARweb.org website would no longer be secure. Additionally, he informed SEDAR that he will no longer be able to serve as our website support staff. The SEDAR website will need to be upgraded to a new secure platform and a new website host will need to be identified.

In February 2022, SEDAR staff contacted nine different website developers that were suggested by various cooperators. Five of these companies declined the project and four submitted proposals. After reviewing the proposals and sending follow-up questions via email, SEDAR staff, along with the assistance of Kelly Klasnick, selected Happy Prime as our new Website Developer in charge of the platform upgrade and content migration of SEDARweb.org. Ongoing negotiations are occurring for web hosting services. The website project is projected to be completed prior to the November 2022 deadline, although complete migration of all the website documents might take longer.

- SOPPs Development and Review Plan

The last update and review of the SEDAR SOPPS was completed in 2015. Major revisions to the Program have been implemented since that time. SEDAR Staff has begun working on updating the SOPPs and plans to begin bringing the Committee sections for your review starting at the Fall 2022 meeting. The current focus will be on the General

Program updates and the Research Track (RT) description and details. Staff feels most of the RT items have been finalized now that several RT assessments have been conducted/are underway. There are components of the Operational Assessments that are still being modified/finalized, and as such, those SOPPS sections will likely come to the Committee for review at the Spring 2023 meeting.

5.1 Action

- The Committee is asked to discuss how the extension of assessment projects is impacting the timeliness of advice being provided for management and explore possible ways to improve the timelines.

MEETING OUTCOME

SEFSC Updates

Center Data Improvement Project: Work continues on the Data Warehouse, where all the data will be more available to the data users, and in the future to the public once the confidentiality issues are handled. Additionally, the Center is working on the development of indices of abundance from all the survey data that will be available to the public. The hope is that the Indices project will be available within a year. This will be part of the Data Warehouse.

MRIP-SEFSC Catch-Weight Estimation Discrepancy: The SEFSC plans to set up a working group with the NOAA Fisheries' MRIP program and Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) to develop Best Practices to handle this issue.

Progress of MRIP Transition Team Report from Office of S&T: The report from the February 2022 workshop is still being developed.

Status of SRFS calibration for use in alternative SEDAR 72 (Gag Grouper) run: It appears that everything is on track to have the review of the SRFS data completed by the S&T contractors by the May 28 deadline as scheduled. If there are no recommended changes, then the SEFSC will commence the assessment using the SRFS data (rather than the MRIP time series) and provide it to the GMFMC for review by the Gulf SSC at its July 2022 meeting.

NMFS White Paper Revisions and Timing: The current plan is to add an addendum to the July 2019 report documenting the recommendations from the Transition team. It was noted that some of the dates may need to be adjusted given the delay in the process. It was suggested that a new updated document might be helpful, to ensure everyone is using the most current report. It is difficult to track what has been accomplished, what is outstanding, next steps, etc. with updates and addendums. Chair Porch stated that he would raise this issue with his colleagues at S&T, as they were the authors of the original report.

Status of SRFS calibration for use in alternative SEDAR 72 (Gag Grouper) run: It appears that everything is on track to have the review of the SRFS data completed by the S&T contractors by the May 28 deadline as scheduled. If there are no recommended changes, then the SEFSC will commence the assessment using the SRFS data (rather than the MRIP time series) and provide it to the GMFMC for review by the Gulf SSC at its July 2022 meeting.

Currency of the recreational data for SEDAR 74 (red snapper): The Transition Team recommended using the MRIP FES estimates for MS, AL, and FL since the state surveys have not

been calibrated yet. The S74 Data Workshop (held May 2-6) recommended the LaCreel estimates but calibrated up to FES units for the Research Track. It was also recommended to use the Texas Parks and Wildlife estimates calibrated to FES units as recommended by the Transition Team for the RT, but it is not intended as the precedent for the Operational assessment.

The intent is to run the RT assessment in FES currency, and any estimates for management purposes would be calibrated to the State currency for monitoring purposes.

The Gulf Council's expectation is that all the State calibrations will be completed in time for the OA. The Texas survey will be the most difficult to complete in that timeframe as representatives from Texas were not engaged in the process until recently. If a calibration is not available for Texas in time for the SEDAR 74 OA, then the default would be to use the native uncalibrated Texas statistics.

The Committee agreed to the following:

Consensus Statement: *The SEDAR Steering Committee requests NOAA Office of Science and Technology and the Gulf States work expediently to calibrate and approve the Red Snapper recreational historical landings time series for use in the SEDAR 74 Red Snapper Operational Assessment.*

Terminal Year of Data to Assessment Completion Discussion

Chair Porch stated that thoroughness and flexibility are the enemies of throughput. The current system has not realized the expected increase in throughput possibly owing to the increasing number of data sets and partners involved. Post-assessment analyses are also continuing to take more time, along with other Cooperator requests.

Interim analyses can provide information to adjust management advice more quickly once an assessment is complete and there is an indicator that tracks the stock well.

While there is considerable flexibility in how OAs are configured, throughput can be increased if changes and modifications to OAs are limited, and OAs are developed similar to previous assessment updates. It was noted that the SA Cooperator has two OAs scheduled for 2022/2023 which have no TWGs, but both are slated to take more than 11 months, so it is not clear that the TWGs are the underlying issue. It was pointed out that the calculation of 11 months starts with the data scoping call and does not reflect the length of time it takes to conduct the assessment. On the other hand, given that data and data processing are regularly cited as a significant bottleneck in the process, any discussion of increasing throughput must include consideration of the data component.

Cooperators noted that it was concerning that the Center was not able to finalize the 2024 schedule. The goal of the SoWs was to allow the SEFSC to come to the Spring Steering Committee meeting and let the Cooperators know if their requests are too much. It would be helpful for the Center to inform the Cooperators what level of workload can be managed. It was hoped the addition of the SoWs into the planning stages would have allowed that.

The Councils are more concerned about the increasing lag between the terminal year of data and delivery of the assessment to the SSC for review (regularly 3-4 years currently) than with increasing the number of assessments produced. The Committee noted that getting the

management program “pretty good information sooner” is a high priority. The expectation is that if the assessment begins in the second half of the year, then the TY would be the previous year. This has not been the case in recent years and has contributed to this TY lag issue.

Simplifying the assessment models might aid in speeding up the process, along with finding better ways to integrate all the pieces of information. Additionally, there may need to be a shift in the mindset of the participants regarding their thinking about if every piece of data is influential and necessary to the assessment.

It is important that the vision of the process discussed during the Steering Committee be filtered down to the workshops and the analysts. There is sometimes a disconnect between the guidance provided at the Steering Committee level and the complexity that is requested during the workshops and webinars.

It was noted that processes are also getting more complicated on the management side once the scientific information becomes available, with increasing requests for post-assessment analyses. Modifications to the management process and the assessment enterprise need to be considered.

The Committee appreciated that this topic was put on the agenda for discussion, and it will be important that the Committee continues to have these discussions as the process is reviewed and potentially modified.

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

The Committee received an update on the new dates for the in-person workshop and were informed how difficult it has been for the data providers to dedicate time to work on this due to the workload issues associated with the other SEDAR assessments underway, and other job-related activities. It was noted by SEDAR Staff that the overall workload should be considered when discussing potential future Procedural Workshops. The Committee did not provide any comments.

SEDAR Website Transition Update

The Committee received an update on the transition of the SEDAR website to a new platform.

It was suggested that a way to download all the documents for a particular workshop at once would be a useful addition. SEDAR Staff will pass this request on to the developers, but we believe this will be a request that can be accommodated.

SOPPs Development and Review Plan

The Committee had no comments on this item. SEDAR Staff will move forward on preparing updated SOPPs sections for review at the Fall 2022 Steering Committee meeting.

BSIA Regional Plan

The Cooperators noted they wish they had more time to contribute to the BSIA Southeast Regional Plan development. The Steering Committee may be a way to bring issues before this group to begin discussions for developing issues.

It was also noted that there were a few technical details regarding SEDAR in the draft plan that need to be corrected. SEDAR Staff will work with the SA Cooperator to get those modifications to the Regional Office.

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 in October 2022.

MEETING OUTCOME

The Committee recommended that the Fall 2022 Steering Committee meeting be in person. It is expected the meeting will last approximately 1.5 days. SEDAR Staff will send out a poll to determine the dates.

Table 1: SEDAR Project Planning Grid – May 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee Discussion Draft

Table Color Legend:

Steering Committee Approved and SEFSC Scheduled Projects										FUTURE Requests							
Steering Committee Approved, PENDING SEFSC SCHEDULING										2024 Preliminary Projects – To Be Finalized at the Spring 2022 Meeting							
SEDAR SCHEDULE OVERVIEW – May 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee Discussion																	
YEAR	SA Team					Gulf Team					Caribbean Team	HMS Team		FL FWCC	Menhaden/ RW only	CMP	
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	1	2				
2022	Scamp OA		Spanish Mackerel OA		Analyst in Training	Scamp OA	Gray Snapper OA	Red Snapper RT	Red Snapper RT		Queen Trigger PR-STX-STT OA	Hammerheads RT			ASFMC Menhaden OA		
2023	Vermilion OA	Gray Triggerfish RT	Black Sea Bass OA	Red Grouper OA		Yellowedge Grouper OA					Gulf Spanish Mackerel OA	Yellowtail (PR); Stoplight Parrotfish (USVI)	HH OA		Mutton Snapper Benchmark		
								Red Snapper OA	Red Snapper OA								
	2024	Red snapper RT	Grey Triggerfish OA	Tilefish OA		Blueline Tilefish OA	Red Grouper OA		Cobia OA	Vermilion OA	Gulf Shrimp RT		Spiny Lobster OA (all islands)				
2025	Gag Grouper OA		Snowy Grouper OA	Red Porgy OA						Caribbean Hogfish		Bull, Spinner, Tiger, Finetooth Sharks RT		Hogfish Bench	Gulf Menhaden OA	King Mackerel OA (SA & Gulf)	
2026	Red Snapper OA	GAJ RT	White Grunt RT			GAJ RT	Gray Triggerfish OA	Tilefish or Blueline OA	Gag Grouper RT	Shrimp OA		Bull, Spinner, Tiger, Finetooth Sharks OA		Black Grouper Bench?			
2027	Atlantic Migratory Cobia OA									Gag Grouper OA							
2028																	

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.