Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Standing, Reef Fish, Socioeconomic, and Ecosystem SSC
Meeting Summary
2023 SEDAR 49 Update for Gulf Lane Snapper
September 28, 2023

The meeting of the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Fishery Management Council's (Council) Standing, Reef Fish, Socioeconomic, and Ecosystem Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC) was convened at 8:30 AM EDT on September 27, 2023. The agenda for this meeting was approved along with the minutes from the July 2023 SSC meeting. Verbatim minutes from past SSC meetings can be reviewed here.

Review: Lane Snapper Updated Catch Analysis

Dr. Francesca Forrestal (Southeast Fisheries Science Center [SEFSC]) presented the 2023 Gulf lane snapper catch analysis, using data through 2022. Gulf lane snapper is currently evaluated periodically using an index-based method from the NOAA Data Limited Toolkit (iTarget). The data included use only landings and dead discards, and not live discards. The iTarget approach here used the catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) index for the headboat fleet, and compares the reference period (1999 – 2008) against a more recent period (2018 – 2022). In the most recent time period, the CPUE index appears to have declined somewhat, but remains above that shown in the reference period. The OFL is currently set at the 50th percentile (OFL = 1.053 mp ww), and the ABC at the 30th percentile (ABC = 1.028 mp ww). The 2023 lane snapper IA indicates a possible increase the OFL to 1.116 mp ww, and the ABC to 1.088 mp ww, under the same parameters, despite a generally consistent index.

An SSC member asked whether there would be another model-based assessment in the near future for lane snapper. Council staff replied that no assessment was scheduled, nor could one be without removing another species from the schedule. The SSC discussed the possibility of conducting another type of assessment, and thought that it was unlikely that the data supported a model-based approach. Another SSC member asked about evaluating discards and length compositions, in conjunction with the analysis presented. Dr. Forrestal replied that those data were not presently available. Ms. Sauls added that FWRI collects lengths of retained catch and discards, and could examine those data. The SEFSC noted that the headboat CPUE index was considered most representative at the time of SEDAR 49 (2017)[1], and thought it possible to reconsider which index might be most representative of the stock. The SSC thought modifying the catch advice for lane snapper in this manner was appropriate, as it was in keeping with past practices for this stock.

> **Motion: The SSC recommends to update catch advice for lane snapper using the 2023 SEDAR 49 interim analysis. The OFL is 1.116 mp ww (in MRIP-FES data units). The ABC is 1.088 mp ww (in MRIP-FES data units).**

> Motion carried with one opposed.

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[1] https://sedarweb.org/documents/sedar-49-final-stock-assessment-report-gulf-of-mexico-data-limited-species/

Meeting Participants

Standing SSC
Luiz Barbieri, *Vice Chair*
Harry Blanchet
David Chagaris
Roy Crabtree
Doug Gregory
David Griffith
Paul Mickle
Trevor Moncrief
Will Patterson
Dan Petrolia
Sean Powers
Steven Scyphers
Jim Tolan

Special Reef Fish SSC
Jason Adriance

Mike Allen
John Mareska

Special Ecosystem SSC
Mandy Karnauskas
Josh Kilborn
Steven Saul

Special Socioeconomic SSC
Luke Fairbanks
Cindy Grace-McCaskey
Jack Isaacs

Council Representatives
Tom Frazer
CJ Sweetman

A list of all meeting participants can be viewed here.