3. SEDAR 76: BLACK SEA BASS OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 Documents

Attachment 3a. Black Sea Bass Projections Presentation
Attachment 3b. SEDAR 76 Black Sea Bass Assessment
Attachment 3c. SAFMC ABC Control Rules

3.2 Presentation

Dr. Matthew Vincent, SEFSC

3.3 Overview

The SEDAR 76 Black Sea Bass Operational Assessment was reviewed by the SSC at the April 2023 meeting. The base run estimate of terminal year (2021) spawning stock is below the MSST ($SSB_{2021}/MSST = 0.32$) indicating that the stock is overfished, and the estimated fishing rate is above F_{MSY}. The terminal estimate, which is based on a three-year geometric mean, is above F_{MSY} in the base run ($F_{2019–2021}/F_{MSY} = 2.14$). Thus, this assessment indicates that the stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing. Projections with $F = 0$ indicate that the stock could recover to its target of SSB_{MSY} within ten years if recruitment returns to its long-term average. If recruitment remains low, the stock abundance will remain low and not achieve SSB_{MSY}.

The SSC deemed the assessment consistent with best scientific information available, was suitable for providing management advice, and worked through the ABC Control Rule to determine P* and the recommended $P_{Rebuild}$. Certain model configurations were requested to be revised before recommending catch levels and rebuilding scenarios (see April SSC report).

The SSC is asked to review, discuss, and provide feedback on the approaches to used by the analyst to develop current F, fit to landings and discards, methods to calculate $F_{0.1}$, and MSY proxy.

3.4 Public Comment

3.5 Action

- Review requested changes for projections for SEDAR 76 and provide guidance on:
  - Years to calculate current F
  - Fitting to landings and discards
  - Methods to calculate $F_{0.1}$
  - MSY proxy
  - How to address changing reference points if landings and discards are separated.

- *The SEFSC asked the SSC for direction on how to proceed with the projections for SEDAR 76. The SSC did not have the time during the webinar to discuss the implications of the many decisions requested given that there were several components of the projections, which could have an impact on the assessment, that will need to be further explored. The SSC recommends forming a technical workgroup to evaluate approaches to handle harvest and dead discards when selecting proxies (e.g., maximum landings yield, maximum total yield, etc.), associated reference points, and impacts of these decisions on catch projections.*
  - *Workgroup members (SSC and SEFSC) will address the following questions, present a set of recommendations during the October SSC meeting, including preliminary OFL/ABC recommendations, with a final decision on OFL/ABC by the full SSC during a January webinar.*
  - *Provide baseline OFL/ABC for the October SSC meeting for comparison*
- *Questions from the SEFSC for the workgroup. How to Proceed?*
  1. *Are the methods for fitting to 2022 landings/discards and choice of Fcurrent for 2023-2024 appropriate?*
  2. *Is Maximum Landed Yield an acceptable proxy for MSY in this scenario or is F0.1 or Total F0.1 (and the associated SSB) more suitable?*
  3. *The proposed 75%F0.1 is not consistent with the ABC control rule. What is the P* that should be used for Black Sea Bass? (Inserted comment from SSC: "Or, should an alternative approach be generated by the SSC. If so, provide detailed recommendation.").*

4. *What should the F for the landings be set at if separating discards from landings in the projections?*
    i. *Would a scenario with landings=0 and discards at recent average level, ignoring the change in reference point be sufficient?*
5. *How should the issue of changing reference points be dealt with if we attempt to separate landings and discards?*