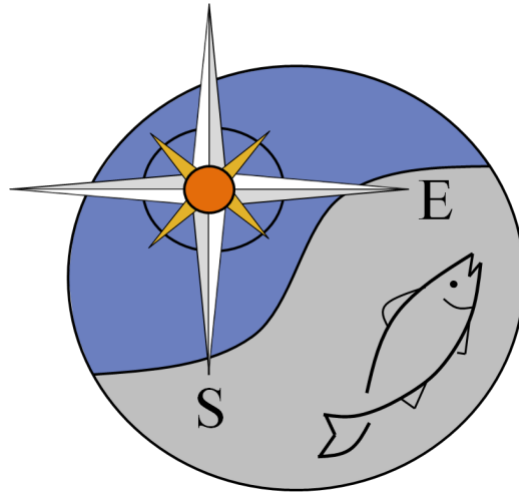


SEDAR



SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting Summary September 28, 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 of Committee discussion points and recommendations.

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

Version: Final

02/07/2023

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- Attachment 3b: Presentation - SEFSC Research Track/Operational Assessment Process Review and Proposal
- Attachment 3c: Presentation – Getting the Research Track Back on the Rails (or Lay New Tracks)
- Attachment 4: Research Track/Operational Assessment/Topical Working Group Guidance Document
- Attachment 5: Operational Assessments Topical Working Groups Process Summary
- Attachment 6a: Research Track/Operational Assessment Development History (2019-present)
- Attachment 6b: SEDAR Research Track – Operational Assessment Approach Development and Discussion Background (Attachment 5 of May 2018 Steering Committee Meeting)
- Attachment 6c: Research Track Reference Documents Overview (Attachment 6 of May 2018 Steering Committee Meeting)
- Attachment 6d: SEFSC 2018 Proposal (Attachment 7 of May 2018 Steering Committee Meeting)
- Attachment 7: SEFSC MPs/MSEs Proposal
- Attachment 8: SEDAR Projects List
- Attachment 9: Project Scheduling Parameters and Guidelines
- Attachment 10: Modifications to the Project Planning Grid from the May 2022 Steering Committee Summary

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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.

NOTE:

The Fall 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting was scheduled to be held September 28-29, 2022, in Charleston, SC. Due to Hurricane Ian the meeting was converted from a 1.5 day in-person meeting to a brief virtual meeting focused on the most time-sensitive topic, the 2024 Project Schedule. All other agenda topics were postponed until the next time the Steering Committee convenes in-person, tentatively scheduled for February 2023.

The complete Overview provided to the Committee prior to the Fall 2022 meeting is retained at the end of the Meeting Summary for the record. Only Topic 4: Assessment Schedule Review was discussed. It is copied here for ease of review.

Assessment Schedule Review

Documents

Attachment 8. SEDAR Projects List

Attachment 9. Project Scheduling Parameters and Guidelines

Attachment 10: Modifications to the Project Planning Grid from the May 2022 Steering Committee Summary

Summary

- The Steering Committee discussed the requested 2024 SEDAR projects during its May 2022 meeting. The meeting summary included the following:

“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.”

- The Master Scheduling webinar with SEDAR and SESFC was held on July 29, 2022. In the past, SEDAR Staff have produced a draft schedule based on the requests approved during the Spring meeting for the scheduling group to discuss. This year, SEFSC Staff took the lead in producing the discussion draft for the webinar. During the development of the 2024 schedule proposal Center Staff developed a variety of parameters and guidelines to aid in scheduling. These guidelines can be reviewed in Attachment 9.
- The draft 2024 schedule presented during the Master Scheduling webinar did not include all the assessments discussed during the May 2022 Steering Committee meeting. The assessments not scheduled were:
 - Gulf of Mexico OAs for Cobia or Vermilion Snapper
 - South Atlantic OAs for Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish
- The following assessments were proposed during the Master Scheduling webinar:
 - The RT for Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish, and the Red Grouper OA were proposed by the Center for 2024.
 - The RT for South Atlantic Red Snapper (beginning in late 2023) and the Gray Triggerfish OA associated with the current RT were proposed by the Center for 2024.
 - CFMC Spiny Lobster OA, an HMS RT for Bull, Spinner, Tiger, and Finetooth sharks, and a benchmark for SE Hogfish were tentatively scheduled
- As all requested assessments from the May 2022 Steering Committee could not be accommodated, the 2024 schedule could not be finalized. Additional discussions by the

Cooperators need to be held to determine what the species priorities are, and ways to accomplish those needs.

- There is a well-defined process for producing Statements of Work to describe the scope of work that will be involved with requested OAs not following a RT (Attachment 4). Cooperators spend considerable time and effort to produce those in accordance with the timeline requested. The Committee is asked to discuss the role of the Statements of Work, along with the timing of their production and that of the Master Scheduling Call.

Action

- Consider any needed modifications to the 2024 Projects
- Review 2025 Priorities
- Consider long-term priorities (2026/2027)
- Discuss if modifications are needed to the timing of Statements of Work and the Master Scheduling Call

MEETING OUTCOME

It is important that the Committee have discussions regarding the future of the Research Track process. It has become more involved than the SEFSC originally envisioned and as such the efficiencies that were hoped for by transitioning to the Research Track/Operational Assessment approach have not been realized. These are important discussions which will be had when the Committee meets in early 2023.

It was noted that the SEDAR/SEFSC Master Scheduling Call may need to be held before the Spring SEDAR Steering Committee meeting. A shift in timing would allow the SEFSC to have a more complete understanding of what might be accomplished for the discussion with the Cooperators at the Spring meeting. Holding the Scheduling Call earlier in the year may require a shift in deadlines for the SoW reviews and negotiations, which will be discussed at the next meeting.

South Atlantic Project Schedule Update: The South Atlantic Cooperator requested at the May Steering Committee meeting that the Red Snapper RT begin in late 2024, to allow adequate time to develop a plan for incorporating new findings and data from the Red Snapper Estimation Research Project.

- *The SEFSC proposal following the scheduling webinar had the Red Snapper RT beginning in late 2023. At the Steering Committee meeting it was agreed that starting assessment preparation in late 2024 (with no data deadlines earlier than 2025) was more realistic and better utilized resources.*
- *The shift in the timing for the Red Snapper RT, along with the refining of what would be included in the Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish RT, will allow for the Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish OAs to be accomplished in 2024. The OAs will need to be staggered, with one occurring earlier in the year, and the other later. This may mean that the one earlier in the year may not have as current data as the one that begins later in the year. The South Atlantic Cooperator requested consideration of partial or preliminary data for the terminal year to reduce the data lag, and noted that the primary fishery for Golden Tilefish typically closes early in the calendar year.*

- *The new South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey (SADLS) will have several years of data available for potential inclusion in the 2024 OAs. To avoid the survey needing to be reviewed by each assessment, the SEFSC suggested a 2023 SADLS review external to the OAs to be conducted in time for the 2024 Tilefish OAs.*

Gulf of Mexico Project Schedule Update: It was noted that the Gray Triggerfish RT scheduled for 2024 needs to be focused on the core issues for that species, such as ageing, and other conceptual aspects. The Terms of Reference developed will have to be specific.

- *The Red Snapper OAs will likely spill considerably into 2024, with the state data programs and the GRSC being some of the outstanding issues.*
- *The SEFSC proposed that the vermilion OA requested for 2024 be turned into an interim assessment and removed from the SEDAR schedule.*
- *The Gulf Cooperator, based on SSC feedback, requested that the Lane Snapper assessment previously requested for 2025 can be changed to an interim analysis and requested that the Cobia OA, requested for 2024, be moved to 2025.*

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

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

Table Color Legend:

Steering Committee Approved and SEFSC Scheduled Projects

Steering Committee Approved, PENDING SEFSC SCHEDULING

FUTURE Requests

2024 Preliminary Projects – To Be Finalized at the Spring 2022 Meeting

Tentatively Scheduled

SEDAR SCHEDULE OVERVIEW – September 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	Red Grouper OA		Yellowedge Grouper OA					Gulf Spanish Mackerel OA	Yellowtail (PR); Stoplight Parrotfish (USVI) Benchmark	HH OA		Mutton Snapper Benchmark	
2024		Grey Triggerfish OA	Tilefish OA			Red Grouper OA		Red Snapper OA	Red Snapper OA		Gulf Shrimp RT				ASFMC Red Drum (RW)	
2025	Red snapper RT	Gag Grouper OA	Atlantic Migratory Cobia OA	Red Porgy OA			Gray Triggerfish RT	Cobia OA	Gag Grouper OA			Spiny-Lobster OA (all Islands)	Bull, Spinner, Tiger, Finetooth Sharks RT		Hogfish Benchmark	Gulf Menhaden OA
2026		GAJ RT	Snowy Grouper OA	Dolphin (MP?)		GAJ RT	Grey Triggerfish OA	Tilefish Complex (MP?)	Scamp OA		Shrimp OA			Black Grouper Bench/MP?	Atl Menhaden (RW only)	
2027	Red Snapper OA			White Grunt RT								Queen Snapper	Bull, Spinner, Tiger, Finetooth Sharks OA			
2028	Vermillion OA															

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.

Below is the complete Overview provided to the SEDAR Steering Committee prior to the Fall 2022 meeting. It is included below for the record.

1 Introduction

1.1 Documents

- Agenda
- Attachment 1. May 2022 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 August 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: The State of Florida and the SEFSC worked together to determine a new Project Schedule for this assessment. The terminal year of data for the assessment will be 2022, though the SEFSC can only guarantee data through 2021. Data Scoping will be held April 2023, with a Data Workshop scheduled for August 21-25, 2023. Assessment webinars will be held from November 2023 to April 2024. The Review Workshop is scheduled for July 9-11, 2024.

SEDAR 80 – Caribbean Queen Triggerfish: The Final Stock Assessment Report for Queen Triggerfish in Puerto Rico was released on 20 July 2022. The CFMC SSC reviewed the assessment at their August 2022 meeting. The SSC had some concerns with the assessment and provided some guidance on ways to improve the assessment from their perspective. The SEFSC will provide feedback to the SSC at their October meeting. The Final Stock Assessment Reports for Queen Triggerfish in St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix have not yet been released.

2.3 Action

- Informational; none required

3 SEDAR Process Review and Discussion

3.1 Documents

Attachment 3a: SEFSC Research Track/Operational Assessment Process Review and Proposal

Attachment 3b: Presentation - SEFSC Research Track/Operational Assessment Process Review and Proposal

Attachment 3c: Presentation – Getting the Research Track Back on the Rails (or Lay New Tracks)

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

Attachment 5: Operational Assessments Topical Working Groups Process Summary

Attachment 6a: Research Track/Operational Assessment Development History (2019-present)

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Attachment 6c: Research Track Reference Documents Overview (Attachment 6 of May 2018 Steering Committee Meeting)

Attachment 6d: SEFSC 2018 Proposal (Attachment 7 of May 2018 Steering Committee Meeting)

Attachment 7: SESFC MPs/MSEs Proposal

3.2 Summary

- Topical Working Groups (TWGs) Process Updates

Data Requirements and Timing: SEFSC Staff have noted that TWGs are taking more time than initially planned. The TWGs are tasked with providing an in-depth review of the topic they are assigned to discuss, and in some cases that is requiring several webinars and additional data analysis. The Center has suggested that, for planning purposes, it should be assumed that a TWG will take 2-3 months and there should only be one TWG underway at any time.

Administrative Responsibilities: One advantage of the TWGs was the ability for appointed participants to meet and discuss issues outside the publicly- noticed webinars that SEDAR coordinates. Those additional webinars are not coordinated by SEDAR but rather by Center personnel. A record of who attends these webinars is needed for the Administrative Record. Guidance regarding who is responsible for these administrative roles is needed.

Follow up on Need for TWG Member Appointments: During the May 2022 Steering Committee meeting, the Committee discussed the need for participants in a TWG to be appointed by a Cooperator. Subsequent discussions with NOAA General Counsel have verified that for someone to participate in both the publicly noticed and non-noticed TWG discussions, they must be appointed by a Cooperator. It was further clarified that an

individual member of a TWG may reach out to an individual not on the TWG regarding a topic or data set, and those discussions should be reported back to the TWG.

- Research Track – Operational Assessment Process Evaluation (Attachment 3-6)

The Cooperators' need to receive more scientific information in a timelier fashion to support management decisions continues to be an issue. The SEDAR process underwent large programmatic changes in 2019 with the shift from the Benchmark-Standard-Update approach to the Research Track (RT) -Operational Assessment (OA) process that is currently in use. Unfortunately, the changes to the process have not produced the increases in productivity the Cooperators had hoped for. The SEFSC will present a proposal on possible modifications to the current SEDAR process (Attachment 5).

To support this discussion, SEDAR Staff have gathered background information on the development of the RT – OA process for reference. Attachment 6a is a summary of the evolution of the process since 2019 when the process was approved for the pilot RT; SEDAR 68 Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Scamp. Attachments 6b and 6c are attachments from the May 2018 Steering Committee meeting which summarized the development of the process and contain reference materials to that time. Attachment 6d is the SEFSC detailed proposal provided for the May 2018 Steering Committee meeting, which served as the foundation for the existing process.

- SEFSC Proposal on Management Procedures (MPs)/Management Strategy Evaluations (MSEs) (Attachment 7)

During the May 2022 Steering Committee, the SEFSC introduced the concept of MPs/MSEs as an additional approach to increase the throughput of management advice. The Committee was interested in the potential of this process but was uncertain how it would work within the SEDAR process. They requested the following:

“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.”

- Update on SEFSC COVID Travel Policy

It is unclear what the current policy/directive is regarding SEFSC personnel requirements to attend SEDAR meetings. The Committee would like to get clarification on the current policy and find a mechanism for changes to that policy to be communicated to the Cooperators in a timely fashion.

- Discussion of SEDAR Policy Regarding Virtual Meetings

It is a long-standing policy that in-person SEDAR meetings are not broadcast, nor are there any provisions for hybrid meetings to be conducted. Data and Review Workshops are held in person, and the assessment process is conducted via webinars. In either case, all members participate in the same format, allowing all participants to interact in the same mode.

Many believe in-person workshops provide the most thorough and efficient way to review large volumes of data and make recommendations on its use. Gathering key personnel together for a designated task allows for a level of focus that is not present when all participants are not located in the same space. There is a feeling of urgency and a need to complete tasks by the end of the workshop. Additionally, the in-person format seems to promote far more discussion than a virtual-only or hybrid meeting.

The SEFSC has requested that the Committee discuss options for virtual or hybrid components for future SEDAR processes. Travel budgets continue to decrease, and the flexibility some partners have regarding requiring travel to meetings is becoming increasingly difficult for SEDAR to manage. Hybrid meetings can be logistically complex to coordinate as well, particularly when there are multiple groups interreacting at the same time, such as at a Data Workshop, but may prove useful for certain aspects of the process.

3.3 Action

- Discussion of the Research Track and Operational Assessment Process to determine if changes to the process need to be considered.
- Provide guidance on the role of SEDAR in Management Procedures/Management Strategy Evaluations
- Provide guidance on current SEFSC travel policies and discuss communication pathways
- Consider if hybrid meetings should be considered for future SEDAR Processes

4 Assessment Schedule Review

4.1 Documents

Attachment 8. SEDAR Projects List

Attachment 9. Project Scheduling Parameters and Guidelines

Attachment 10: Modifications to the Project Planning Grid from the May 2022 Steering Committee Summary

4.2 Summary

- The Steering Committee discussed the requested 2024 SEDAR projects during its May 2022 meeting. The meeting summary included the following:

“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.”

- The Master Scheduling webinar with SEDAR and SESFC was held on July 29, 2022. In the past, SEDAR Staff have produced a draft schedule based on the requests approved during the Spring meeting for the scheduling group to discuss. This year, SEFSC Staff took the lead in producing the discussion draft for the webinar. During the development of the 2024 schedule proposal Center Staff developed a variety of parameters and guidelines to aid in scheduling. These guidelines can be reviewed in Attachment 9.
- The draft 2024 schedule presented during the webinar did not include all the assessments discussed during the May 2022 Steering Committee meeting. The assessments not scheduled were:
 - Gulf of Mexico OAs for Cobia or Vermilion Snapper
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- The RT for Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish, and the Red Grouper OA were proposed by the Center for 2024.
- The RT for South Atlantic Red Snapper (beginning in late 2023) and the Gray Triggerfish OA associated with the current RT were proposed by the Center for 2024.
- CFMC Spiny Lobster OA, an HMS RT for Bull, Spinner, Tiger, and Finetooth sharks, and a benchmark for SE Hogfish were tentatively scheduled
- As all requested assessments from the May 2022 Steering Committee could not be accommodated, the 2024 schedule could not be finalized. Additional discussions by the Cooperators need to be held to determine what the species priorities are, and ways to accomplish those needs.
- There is a well-defined process for producing Statements of Work to describe the scope of work that will be involved with requested OAs not following a RT (Attachment 4). Cooperators spend considerable time and effort to produce those in accordance with the timeline requested. The Committee is asked to discuss the role of the Statements of Work, along with the timing of their production and that of the Master Scheduling Call.

4.3 Action

- Consider any needed modifications to the 2024 Projects
- Review 2025 Priorities
- Consider long-term priorities (2026/2027)
- Discuss if modifications are needed to the timing of Statements of Work and the Master Scheduling Call

5 Other Business

- Southeast Fisheries Science Center Updates:

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

- Update on the BSIA Framework for the Southeast Region
- Update on the NMFS White Paper Revisions and Timing
- SEFSC Staffing Discussion, with Particular Focus on Reduced South Atlantic Assessment Staff

The Outcome Planning Grid from the May 2022 Steering Committee Meeting had five assessment team members listed for the South Atlantic, with one of those designated as an Analyst in Training for 2022 and 2023. The latest SEFSC Organizational Chart received by SEDAR 14 July 2022 indicates that the SA Team has four analysts, with no indication that a fifth individual will be added. The South Atlantic Cooperator would like some clarification regarding the potential of adding a fifth analyst, particularly because one of the SA Team members is tasked to work on species the Council does not manage (Menhaden – both Gulf and Atlantic, and Atlantic migratory Cobia).

- Discussion Regarding When a SEDAR Project is Complete

The SEDAR Process for a particular project ends when SEDAR releases the Final Stock Assessment Report. That report is posted to the SEDAR website, and a Dissemination Memo is sent to the Cooperator and the Steering Committee. Once that happens, any additional requests, modifications, SSC review reports, etc. are handled by the Cooperator and are part of their Administrative Record. SEDAR does provide a location on the SEDAR Project Page on the website (under Post-SEDAR Documentation) where materials related to, but not part of, the SEDAR process can be housed to provide ease of locating those materials.

In the last few years, several completed SEDAR Projects have, months after release, been determined to have mistakes or changes requested. The Committee is asked to discuss if the timing of when a SEDAR project is considered completed should be modified.

- SEDAR Website Transition Update

The updated SEDAR website is now live. It was transitioned to a new platform (Word Press) and accessibility and navigation were improved. Currently, there is no way to have a “Download All” feature for ongoing projects, as it requires a manual consolidation of the documents on a continuing basis. This feature can be added once a project is complete and should a new method to compile the files for ongoing products be identified, it will be examined.

5.1 Action

- The Committee should discuss the issues and provide recommendations if needed.

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 May 2023.

Table 1: SEDAR Project Planning Grid – September 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee SEFSC Proposal/ 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 – September 2022 SEDAR Steering Committee Discussion

Tentatively Scheduled

YEAR	SA Team					Gulf Team					Caribbean Team	HMS Team		FL FWCC	Menhaden/ RW only	CMP
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2027	Vermilion OA			White Grunt RT												
2028			Tilefish OA	Blueline Tilefish OA				Cobia OA	Vermilion OA							

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.