

SEDAR

SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Caribbean Fishery Management Council
NOAA Fisheries
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

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SEDAR Steering Committee

August 1 - 2, 2006

St Thomas USVI

Summary Minutes

Tuesday, August 1, 2006 9:00 am - Wednesday, August 2, 12:00 p.m.

1. Introductions

The SEDAR Steering Committee convened at 9:00 am Tuesday, August 1, 2006 at the Marriott Frenchman's Reef in St. Thomas, USVI.

Members in attendance: Nancy Thompson, SEFSC Director (Chair); Roy Crabtree, SER Administrator; Wayne Swingle, GMFMC Executive Director; Robin Reichers, GMFMC Chair; Bob Mahood, SAFMC Executive Director; George Geiger, SAFMC Vice-Chair; and Miguel Rolon, CFMC Executive Director.

Staff in attendance: John Carmichael, SEDAR Coordinator; Graciela Garcia-Moliner, CFMC.

Observers in attendance: David Olsen, St. Thomas Fisherman's Association.

2. Agenda Review

The Committee approved the Agenda. Due to an approaching tropical storm, the committee agreed to attempt to complete the scheduled business by the end of the day.

3. Approval of Minutes (April 19, 2006 Conference Call)

The minutes were approved.

4. King Mackerel Subcommittee Report

The Committee was provided the report of the king mackerel joint SSC subcommittee. The Committee did not believe that the suggestion of conducting Monte Carlo simulations will result in a mixing assumption different than 50/50 given the suggested simulation parameters. The Committee also discussed the other uncertainties in the assessment that were noted by the sub-committee.

The Committee agreed that it is not necessary to forward this issue for further deliberation by the subcommittee nor is it necessary to solicit an independent review of the mixing rate issue.

The Committee agreed that the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils should work to a consensus mixing rate assumption during the joint meeting scheduled for September 2006 in Hilton Head, SC.

5. Assessment Update Process : Review

The Committee reviewed and accepted the Guideline's text regarding the update process.

6. SSC role in SEDAR : Review

The Committee discussed the role of SSCs extensively and agreed that Council SSC's play an important role in the SEDAR process. The Committee supported the description of the SSC's role and responsibilities as described in the SEDAR guidelines.

SSC's are responsible for certifying for the Councils that SEDAR assessments are based upon the best available science and appropriate for management. In meeting this obligation, SSC's are expected to provide an overall review of the assessment, its findings, and the process by which the assessment was conducted. In general the SSC's should address whether the Terms of Reference were met by each workshop and whether the assessment was conducted in accordance to the guidelines developed and approved by the Councils and Steering Committee. SSC's are neither obligated nor expected to duplicate the charge of the Review Panel by providing an additional and complete 'peer review' of the assessment data and methods.

Council SSC's are responsible for providing specific management advice based on the SEDAR assessment.

SSC's are responsible for presenting to their council their evaluation of the adequacy of the assessment, their interpretation and summary of the assessment methods and findings, and their recommendations regarding appropriate actions. A representative appointed by the SSC should take the primary lead in presenting SEDAR assessments to the Council. Councils should consider this responsibility when making appointments to SEDAR workshops, especially the review workshop.

7. Research and Monitoring Needs Report

The Committee reviewed the report on research and monitoring needs for future SEDAR assessments and discussed appropriate actions.

The Committee agreed that the next step is to address data gaps and significant research needs. Research and monitoring programs should

be directed toward those needs that will lead to tangible improvements in stock assessments. The Councils were asked to provide this report and the consolidated SEDAR research recommendations document to their SSCs so that the SSCs can prioritize research and monitoring needs. The prioritization will be used to guide CRP and MARFIN requests for proposals. Councils are asked to provide reports on prioritization for the next Committee meeting.

The Committee suggested using this document as a basis for a 'Report Card' on SEDAR, addressing how the process has improved assessment development and research and monitoring coordination.

The Committee discussed the Headboat and MARMAP programs in particular and agreed that these programs should be independently reviewed. The Headboat program will be addressed in conjunction with the broad national review of recreational data collection programs. The MARMAP program is conducted by SC DNR and therefore the South Atlantic Council should contact the SC representative to discuss avenues for review.

The Committee suggested that the South Atlantic and Caribbean Councils develop data collection committees at the Council level to help coordinate and prioritize research and monitoring programs. The Gulf Council currently has such a committee.

8. SEDAR workload and Process Schedule

The Committee reviewed the overall SEDAR workload, especially with regard to delays in completing recent assessments. It was noted that a heavy ICCAT work load in the last several years posed a heavy burden on assessment staff, but that for 2007 that work load will be much lighter. It was also noted that the efficiency of the process is improving and will likely continue to improve as the appointed participants become experienced. There is concern that increasing the time allotted to each SEDAR assessment cycle will reduce the number of assessments provided to the Councils. The Committee declined to make any changes in the time allotment, and instead will reconsider this issue once the assessments scheduled for 2007 are completed.

9. Assessment Workplan

The Committee reviewed the workplan. A revised schedule for benchmark and update assessments is provided (Attachment 1).

The king mackerel update was deleted. King mackerel will be addressed as a benchmark in SEDAR 20. If the red drum benchmark is deleted, king mackerel will be addressed in SEDAR 18.

Gulf red snapper will be updated in 2009, to include data through 2008.

Currently scheduled updates of the SEDAR 9 assessments will be deleted.

The Goliath grouper update will be deleted due to lack of additional data. Councils are asked to have their SSCs review available data on Goliath grouper and progress on significant research needs identified in the benchmark assessment to determine whether an update or benchmark is appropriate and recommend the timing of the next action. The SEFSC is requested to consider whether reasonable targets for removals of Goliath grouper for scientific purposes can be developed.

The red drum benchmark was labeled tentative. There is concern regarding adequate data and progress on critical research needs for gulf red drum. Council SSC are requested to review red drum data and recommend whether benchmark assessments are appropriate. The Gulf Council agreed to coordinate with the Gulf states and the GSMFC to evaluate red drum data availability. The South Atlantic Council will coordinate with South Atlantic states and the ASMFC. A report will be provided at the next Steering Committee meeting.

The Committee discussed the potential to assess other species in the region. Candidate species of concern include red snapper, red grouper, and black grouper in the South Atlantic; Queen triggerfish, deepwater snappers, and red hind in the Caribbean; and black grouper in the Gulf. It was agreed that species currently listed as overfished or overfishing should be addressed through SEDAR assessments at some point.

The Committee agreed that Council SSCs should evaluate data availability for those species which have not been assessed by SEDAR and determine whether adequate data exist to conduct assessments. Data tabulations for TIP, MRFSS, and the Headboat program similar to that included in the research and monitoring report should be prepared for the species of concern listed, those currently reported as overfished or overfishing, those specifically addressed in the annual report to Congress, and those identified as indicator species by the Councils. Council SSCs should review available data and provide a list of species for consideration in future SEDAR assessments. For the next Steering Committee meeting each Council should provide a list of candidate species that it believes should be considered for assessment and therefore included in the universe of species for consideration in SEDAR scheduling.

The Committee agreed to develop an additional 'stocks of concern' listing for future planning purposes. This list will identify those species for which concerns exist regarding stock status that lack adequate information for traditional catch-based assessments or lack progress on critical research issues that inhibit drawing reliable inference from assessments. In reviewing additional species, Councils and their SSC's should indicate whether the species should be considered for benchmark or the stocks of concern listing.

General timing of update assessments should be based on recommendations from benchmark assessments. Recommendations for update timing will be extracted from recent assessment reports and used to develop a preliminary update assessment schedule for consideration at the next steering committee meeting.

Concern was expressed regarding data availability for conducting traditional assessments of Caribbean resources. Experience has proven that landings data by species is lacking, especially in the Virgin Islands. There is also a paucity of biological characterization and population abundance information. SEFSC personnel are considering alternative assessment methods that may be better suited to this region.

10. SAFE Reports

The Committee discussed the status of SAFE reports in the Southeast Region.

It was agreed that SAFE reports could provide useful information to the Councils, especially with regard to fishery information between benchmark and update assessments.

Concerns exist as to content and responsibilities for completing the reports. The Committee agreed that reports should be concise and pose minimal additional workload. General contents should include landings, status of regulations, values for important status indicators, and progress on research and monitoring. Reports should be structured around FMPs. It is impractical and may not be necessary to prepare a complete annual SAFE for every species in the region.

The Committee instructed that John Carmichael should prepare a proposed SAFE report framework for the next meeting. The proposal should include a SAFE report outline, list of stocks, timing for submission, and alternatives for addressing the work load and staff responsibilities.

11. Workshop Procedures

The Committee reviewed several workshop procedure issues.

Review Workshop Chairs: The Committee discussed the continued difficulties in securing chairs for review workshops. In spite of problems with obtaining chairs, it was agreed that the current review workshop composition was working well and that the Chairs appointed by the SEFSC Director performed well. The Committee agreed to consider SSC members eligible as chairs if necessary, and that using SSC members from a Council not associated with a particular assessment could address any concerns over independence of the review panel. Recent NMFS retirees should also be considered.

Assessment Workshop Rapporteurs: The Committee agreed that it was not effective to expect Council staff to serve as assessment workshop rapporteur. The Committee agreed that SSC members appointed to assessment workshops by the Council should serve as workshop Rapporteurs. Councils were asked to notify their appointments of this role. Councils should identify the appointed rapporteur when providing lists of appointed participants to SEDAR staff.

Review Workshop Rapporteurs: The committee agreed that the lead assessment agency/team should provide rapporteurs for the review workshop. One rapporteur should be provided for each assessment under review. The rapporteur should work with both the review panel and the assessment team to ensure that all tasks are addressed and all comments are reflected in the panel reports.

Draft Advisory Report: The Committee agreed to modify the Terms of Reference and SEDAR guidelines to allow the assessment workshop panel to develop a draft advisory report for completion during the review workshop. It is agreed that the SEDAR assessment report is a group effort of all workshop attendees, thus no particular group should expect ownership or author credits, and therefore plagiarism is not a concern for such works.

12. Determination of ABC

The Committee discussed recent suggestions by some SEDAR panels that developing ABC recommendations is a task better suited to Council SSCs.

The Committee agreed to retain the review and assessment workshop TORs requiring ABC recommendations.

The Committee suggested that assessment and workshop panels are expected to apply their collective judgment to this issue and recommend values that are appropriate given the level of uncertainty in the particular assessment. Panels are to be reminded that they are not recommending TACs or specific catch limits. Panels are to be reminded that they should recommend an appropriate ABC range based on the performance of the particular assessment being considered.

The Committee agreed that workshop panels should be instructed to avoid over-complicating this requirement. Panels should make recommendations appropriate to allow the Council to achieve stated management goals. If no specific goals are stated, panels should make recommendations appropriate to prevent overfishing and prevent stocks from becoming overfished.

13. Presentation of Final SEDAR assessments to Councils

The panel discussed the process by which assessments are presented to the Councils and the SSCs. The Committee recommended greater involvement by the SSCs and a reminder that, regardless of how the assessment is presented, SEDAR assessments are a group effort and not the work of any one individual or agency. Determining presenters ties into the role of the SSC in SEDAR assessments, and some of the issues relative to this agenda item were discussed when the Committee reviewed the overall SSC role.

The Committee discussed the best approach for presenting assessment findings to the Council. It was agreed that a member of the review panel or the review panel chair would be the most appropriate presenter of the review panel reports, although costs and time demands make such an approach prohibitive in most instances. CIE resources are limited, and contracting CIE-appointed reviewers to attend several meetings following the review workshop would consume resources that would be better allocated to conducting reviews.

The Committee noted that since assessments are reviewed and approved by the SSCs as based on the 'best available science' and 'appropriate for management', then it follows that the final presentation to the Council could be led by the SSC. It was noted that many other technical presentations follow this model, including most stock assessments prior to SEDAR.

The Committee agreed that an SSC member appointed by the Council to observe the review panel proceedings could reasonably be expected to present the overall assessment to the Council. Councils should inform their appointed participants that they may be expected to present the assessment to the Council on behalf of the SSC.

The Committee instructed Staff to ask the review panel chair or a review panel member to present the review panel reports to the Gulf Council and SSC for red grouper. However, if they refuse, or financial resources are lacking, or if making such a request further inhibits the already challenging search for a chair, the issue should not be forced and a representative of the SSC should make present the assessment findings and the SSCs recommendations regarding the assessment to the Council.

The Committee agreed that Councils should make every effort to schedule their meetings such that the number of assessment presentations required of the analytical team is minimized. Councils should schedule meetings to accommodate a technical presentation to all of their various technical bodies at once, rather than individual presentations across several meetings of the various bodies. Analytical representatives can be on hand to answer questions when the assessment is presented to the Council, but are not obligated to lead the presentation.

14. Next Meeting

The Steering Committee typically meets in August and February. The next meeting will be held in Charleston, SC, hosted by the South Atlantic Council.

SEDAR staff will contact members to determine availability during January - March 2007.

15. Other Business

Recreational Data: The Committee was provided an update on the recreational data issue. A website accessible through the NMFS Science & Technology page will be developed to provide information on the recreational data collection review. A workshop is planned for late summer to identify management and science needs. Key to this review is an acknowledgement that the MRFSS is currently expected to provide more detail and resolution than originally intended.

Management Actions: The Steering Committee intends to address management planning at the next meeting. Phil Steele will replace Ginny Fay as the SERO contact for management coordination. Each Council is asked to provide SEDAR staff a list of scheduled management activities for 2007.

Social and Economic Data Integration: Social and economic data collection programs are increasing, leading to demand for a SEDAR-style approach to developing social and economic evaluations. Sociologists and economists have participated in several SEDAR workshops, though there has been no formal evaluation of these data. John Carmichael will work with Jim Waters of the SEFSC to discuss integration of social and economic data into a SEDAR framework. This effort should not detract from the current focus on benchmark assessments, and should be directed toward a separate process. The initial goals are to determine what data exist, what advice or analyses are required, and what needs are most critical. A potential test case is the planned allocation of Gulf grouper resources based on economics.

16. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNED TASKS

AGENDA #	TASK	DUE	Assigned
4	Mackerel mixing assumption consensus	09/2007	Gulf and SA Councils
7	Report on research needs prioritization	Next Meet	All Councils (SSC)
7	Avenues for independent review of MARMAP	Next Meet	SAFMC
7	Consider standing Council committee to discuss data needs	Next Meet	SAFMC/CFMC
9	Red Drum data evaluation	Next Meet	SAFMC/GMFMC (SSC)
9	ID 'Stocks of Concern'; evaluate data sources; provide list of candidate species	Next Meet	All Councils (SSC)
9	Proposed Update Assessment Timing	Next Meet	SEDAR Coord.
10	SAFE Report Proposal	Next Meet	SEDAR Coord.
11	Modify Guidelines: draft advisory report at assessment workshop	Next Meet	SEDAR Coord.
14	Schedule Next Meeting	10/2007	SEDAR Coord.
15	Management Actions: Provide list of planned 2007 activities	Next Meet	All Councils
15	S-E Integration: Develop framework for Social-Econ data SEDAR	Next Meet	SEDAR Coord.

Attachment 1. Revised SEDAR Benchmark and Update Schedule

SEDAR #	BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS	Year ¹	Current Status ²
12	GMFMC Red Grouper	2006 F	ONGOING
13	Small Coastal Sharks	2007	PLANNING
14	CFMC Yellowfin Grouper, Mutton Snapper, Queen Conch	2007 S	PLANNING
15	SAFMC greater amberjack, White Grunt	2007 F	SCHEDULED
16	GMFMC Yellowedge grouper, Tilefish	2008 S	SCHEDULED
17	SA Spanish Mackerel/Black Sea Bass	2008 F	SCHEDULED
18	SA and GOM red drum. TENTATIVE??	2009 S	SCHEDULED
19	Hogfish. Atlantic YTS (update or benchmark) Review ASMFC menhaden and Croaker.	2009 F	SCHEDULED
20	King Mackerel	2010 S	SCHEDULED
21	CFMC Yellowtail, spiny lobster, queen conch	2010 F	SCHEDULED
22		2011	
23		2011	
24		2012	
25		2012	

SEDAR Update #	UPDATE ASSESSMENTS	Benchmark SEDAR#	Scheduled Completion	Status
1	SA Black Sea bass	2	4/22/2005	FINAL
2	SA Red Porgy	1	May 25 2006	FINAL
3	SA Vermillion Snapper	2	2007	Scheduled
4	SA Goldentile/Snowy Grouper	4	2009	Scheduled
5	Gulf Red Snapper	7	2009 (08 data)	Scheduled
6	FL Spiny Lobster	8	2010	Scheduled
7				