

Scientific and Statistical Committees
Scope of Work
January 10 – 12, 2023
Tampa, Florida

Agenda Item IV: Selection of SSC representative for the January 30 – February 2, 2023 Gulf Council Meeting, to be held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Action: Information Only

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Nance will provide a summary to Council Committees, answer questions and provide insight into the SSC deliberations from this SSC meeting.

Agenda Item V: Review of SEDAR 75: Gulf of Mexico Gray Snapper

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Francesca Forrestal (Southeast Fisheries Science Center [SEFSC]) will present the findings of the SEDAR 75 Operational Assessment of Gulf of Mexico Gray Snapper. SEDAR 75 resolves several concerns from the previous model (SEDAR 51 2018), and incorporates updated recreational landings data calibrated to the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES). Dr. Forrestal will review the model's construction and development, included indices of relative abundance, base model estimations and results, diagnostics, and yield projections based on the Council's currently defined status determination criteria. The SSC should consider the information presented and make any appropriate recommendations about whether the assessment is consistent with the best scientific information available (BSIA). The SSC should also evaluate the projections and consider whether to recommend modifications to the catch limits to the Council.

Agenda Item VI: Discussion: Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Modifications

Action: Presentation, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The SSC will review presentations by the SEFSC on alternative approaches to the current Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule, used by the SSC for determining the scientific uncertainty between the overfishing limit (OFL) and the ABC. This information has been presented to the SSC in May 2021 and May 2022; following the latter SSC meeting, the SSC requested alternatives using the Ralston et al. (2011) approach, the Restrepo et al. (1998) approach, and the Privitera-Johnson and Punt (2020) modification of the Ralston approach. The current ABC Control Rule has been in place since 2011; however, SSC members have regularly expressed a desire to revisit the control rule. This stems from the propensity for the buffer determined by the P* approach generally resulting in a difference

between the OFL and ABC that is not representative of the uncertainty in the stock assessment. The SSC will review these presentations and the background materials provided, and should focus its efforts on how to revise Tier 1 of the ABC Control Rule. The SSC should make revisions and recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item VII: Public Comment

Action: Information

Committee input and next steps: Members of the public will be able to address the SSC directly with respect to the topics discussed during this webinar meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

Agenda Item VIII: Evaluation of Updated Red Snapper Calibration Ratios for Gulf State Surveys to MRIP

Action: Presentations, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Representatives from Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi will present a proposal to revise calibrations for each state's respective estimates of private vessel and state charter for-hire landings of red snapper to MRIP's Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS). These proposals are updates to the methods, years, and waves considered by the SSC in August 2020. The states will provide justification for their recommended selection of year(s) and wave(s) within year(s). The SSC will consider the following terms of reference for each state's proposal:

- 1. Is the proposed revised calibration ratio calculated in a method that is not dissimilar from that which was approved as consistent with the best scientific information available (BSIA) by the SSC in August 2020?*
- 2. Is the justification for the year(s) and waves(s) recommended for calculating the proposed revised calibration ratio sufficient? If not, describe why and if possible, offer alternatives.*
- 3. Are there any additional clarifications necessary for considering a state's proposed revised calibration ratio as being consistent with BSIA?*

The SSC will evaluate the presentations and background materials provided by each state, and consider the above three terms of reference in its evaluation. The SSC will then make a recommendation to the Council about each state's proposed revised calibration ratio and its suitability for informing fisheries management.

Agenda Item IX: Public Comment

Action: Information

Committee input and next steps: Members of the public will be able to address the SSC directly with respect to the topics discussed during this webinar meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

Agenda Item X: Review of Gulf Red Grouper Interim Analysis and Projections

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Katie Siegfried (SEFSC) will present the 2023 Gulf red grouper interim analysis, using landings and data and the NMFS Bottom Longline index of relative abundance through 2022. These data have been prepared to help inform the SSC about the condition of the Gulf red grouper stock, for which the catch limits were previously reduced following the SEDAR 61 stock assessment in response to projections about substantial episodic mortality from the 2018 red tide in the eastern Gulf. Catch limits were subsequently increased following the 2021 interim analysis, which indicated the index of abundance used to track the population trend for the stock had improved. The SEFSC provides these interim analyses for Gulf red grouper annually for SSC evaluation; the 2022 interim analysis was provided as a “health check”. The SSC should consider the information presented, and determine whether to recommend modified catch limits for red grouper to the Council.

Agenda Item XI: Public Comment

Action: Information

Committee input and next steps: Members of the public will be able to address the SSC directly with respect to the topics discussed during this webinar meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

Agenda Item XII: Other Business

Action: Discussion

Committee Input and Next Steps: Additional items may be brought up for discussion by SSC members, time permitting. If the SSC wishes to pursue action, then action can be scheduled at a future SSC meeting.