






UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

July 7, 2022

To: Carrie Simmons, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

From: Evan Howell, Ph.D. 
Director, NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology

Clay Porph, Ph.D. 
Director, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center

Andy Strelcheck 
Director, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office

cc: Katie Siegfried, Jack McGovern, Richard Cody, John Foster, Rob Ahrens

Subject: Florida State Reef Fish Survey gag (*Mycteroperca microlepis*) catch estimates calibration review

As requested in the Gulf Survey Transition Workshop in February 2022, terms of reference were developed for a review of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) ratio based calibrations to convert federal survey estimates of catch to State Reef Fish Survey (SRFS) equivalents throughout the historical time series prior to the implementation of the SRFS. The review coordinated by NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology, was completed in May 2022 and findings subsequently evaluated by NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology (OST) and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) staff. There were no major concerns identified in the review that would preclude the use of the calibrations for their intended purpose. NOAA Fisheries OST will follow up with FWC staff and reviewers to address minor questions related to documentation formatting and presentation and clarification of justification for variance approximation methodology. Florida is developing a response to reviewer feedback which will be made available once both parties are satisfied that questions raised have been adequately addressed. In email consultation between FWC, NOAA Fisheries OST and SEFSC, FWC confirmed to NOAA Fisheries that to the best of their knowledge, the calibrations provided by their agency were correctly calculated as presented. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center confirmed that the stock assessment could proceed using the SRFS calibrated estimates.

Attached supporting documentation for consideration by the Council SSC includes:

- collated terms of reference developed following the February 2022 workshop, for the review of calibrations and completed reviewer reports;
- Documentation provided by FWC (Notation, text versions of R-related files and data input and outputs;
- February 2022 Gulf Transition Workshop Proceedings.

