

**SEDAR Committee Report  
April 7, 2025  
Mr. JD Dugas – Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab I, No. 1**) and the minutes (**Tab I, No. 2**) from the August 2024 meeting were approved as written.

*SEDAR Steering Committee Summary Report February 2025 (Tab I, No. 4)*

The Committee heard a brief overview from Council staff of the major agenda items discussed during the February 4 – 5, 2025, SEDAR Steering Committee meeting held in Charleston, South Carolina. Briefly, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) proposed taking administrative lead for the assessment process, which is usually conducted via webinar. SEDAR would still coordinate the data and review workshops. The SEFSC assured SEDAR cooperators that transparency would be maintained, along with updates provided to the cooperator’s SSC, as applicable. The SEFSC asked cooperators to expect funding and staffing reductions, and indicated a likely need to revisit the stock assessment process once more is known on that front. The SEDAR Steering Committee also discussed the key stocks approach for assessing priority species by region and using simpler models where appropriate. Council staff then reviewed assessment progress to date and finalized assessment scheduling through the end of 2026.

A Committee member was concerned about loss of federal resources and their potential effects on the stock assessment process. Council staff said they would coordinate with the SEFSC and the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) to get a better understanding of staffing changes and impacts. SERO added that losses to the stock assessment branch for the Gulf would be expected to have a negative effect on assessment output, which could be better quantified once all reductions are finalized. Another Committee member noted the involvement of the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) in reviewing stock assessments and asked if CIE involvement would be in jeopardy in the expected funding reductions. Council staff said that review workshops planned for 2025 were expected to have CIE reviewers, but their involvement beyond that point is unknown. The SEFSC went into further detail about staffing losses and reductions and said that it is still premature to report on total staffing reductions. The SEFSC thought a more thorough stock assessment of effects would be available by the June 2025 Council meeting.

*Review and Discussion of Gulf of Mexico SEDAR Schedule (Tab I, No. 5)*

Council staff will provide an updated draft of the Gulf SEDAR Schedule which has been finalized by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center through 2026. A Committee member recalled that in June 2022, the planned assessment of greater amberjack was expected to be completed in 2026, and now, it is not expected to be completed until 2028. The Committee member also noted a Council request for an update on the Greater Amberjack Count, which will be a key new source of data for the planned greater amberjack assessment. Council staff replied that the lead principal investigator for the Greater Amberjack Count had informed staff that they were not yet prepared to present preliminary results but expected to be able to provide those at the June 2025 meeting. Council staff assured the Committee that the planning for the greater

amberjack assessment was locked in on the SEDAR schedule at this point and that the assessment would be completed as efficiently as possible while ensuring key new data, like the G-FISHER composite video index and the Greater Amberjack Count, can be considered.

*Other Business*

No Other Business was brought before the Committee.

This concludes my report.