

**Standing, Reef Fish, Mackerel, and
Socioeconomic SSC Meeting Summary
Webinar
October 29, 2019**

The meeting of the Standing, Reef Fish, Mackerel, and Socioeconomic Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC) was convened at 1:00 p.m. on October 29, 2019. The agenda was approved as written.

NMFS Report to Congress: Section 201 of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2018 (Tab III)

Dr. Richard Cody of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reviewed a presentation on the NMFS Report to Congress on Section 201 of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2018, which focuses on cooperative data collection. This NMFS report is due to Congress by the end of 2019. The report discusses the incorporation of data and analyses into stock assessments, and the use of surveys and other research from states and non-governmental sources for making fisheries management decisions. NMFS has, or intends to, consult with regional fishery management councils, SSCs, and regional marine fisheries commissions. The draft report primarily references National Standard 2 (use of the best scientific information available [BSIA]), the Stock Assessment Improvement Plan, and Marine Recreational Information Program procedures. The report is divided into sections, including: types of data and analyses, inclusion of state and non-governmental sources, BSIA as the basis for fisheries management decisions, and recommendations.

The SSC thought that “peer-review” has a broad definition, and should be explicitly defined in the report. Staff reviewed Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) comments on the report provided during the Council’s October 2019 meeting in Galveston, Texas. Generally, the Council was also concerned about the definition of “peer-review”, the characterization of spatiotemporal requirements for data to be used in assessments, and the burdens placed on states and non-governmental agencies to have surveys calibrated and certified multiple times prior to inclusion in stock assessments. Some Council members noted that this is not the current process followed in most stock assessments in the southeast region. For example, during the Data Workshop, data inputs are often not delivered peer-reviewed, calibrated, and formatted correctly for input in to the stock assessments. NMFS staff noted that the Caribbean Fishery Management Council was also concerned that data could be excluded if not subject to prior external peer-review. NMFS staff stated that they will address these concerns in the report.

The SSC thought that implementation of the requirements of Section 201 will need to be region-specific. It will be important to mention each region’s assessment processes to make sure that Congress knows that each region has some process in place to formally review data and assessments. Further, the report should clearly define the difference between survey certification and calibration, as the differences in these designations have been a source of confusion for survey developers and data providers. The SSC also recommended distinguishing between traditional and non-traditional data types and spatiotemporal utility, since small, short studies are often used to answer very specific research questions which ultimately reduces uncertainty. The SSC added that

these data are not just used in stock assessments, but also in informing other aspects of fisheries management (social impact assessments, economic analyses). Lastly, the SSC advised NMFS to be specific about the intended role of regional liaisons for sourcing data to be used in stock assessments, so that these roles could be carried out effectively.

Council staff noted other issues raised during the October 2019 meeting. The Council suggested that the report could have identified improved ways of incorporating and implementing section “B) provide specific recommendations for collecting data and performing analyses identified as necessary to reduce uncertainty in and improve the accuracy of future stock assessments...”. Further, the Council requested that the ongoing efforts to implement the for-hire electronic reporting requirements should be included in the report. NMFS indicated that they would consider putting some of this information in the report for all regional Councils.

NMFS staff indicated that their intent is to incorporate all comments from the various regions, and that they will inform the regions of the progress of the report. The SSC favored overexplaining the regional nuances to congressional staff to avoid the chance of something going overlooked.

A Practitioner’s Guide to Fisheries Social Impact Assessment

Drs. Patricia Clay and Lisa Colburn provided an overview to A Practitioner’s Guide to Fisheries Social Impact Assessment (SIA). The technical memo is intended to support the formal guidelines on conducting SIAs by providing some practical direction for those without formal training in preparing SIAs. The authors have already solicited feedback from NEPA practitioners, regional offices, and science centers, and noted that each region is unique and requires a local approach to SIAs. SSC members discussed the draft guide. Suggestions included collecting and presenting longitudinal data in SIAs similar to the incorporation of landings time series in stock assessments, and simplification and automation of indicators data to reduce cost burdens. Another suggestion was that the draft could benefit from greater consideration of the recreational sector. The SSC’s comments will be incorporated into the letter staff is drafting on behalf of the Council.

Other Business

Council staff reviewed timing and agenda items for the January 2020 meeting of the Standing, Reef Fish, Socioeconomic, and Coral SSCs.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. on October 29, 2019.

Participants (all via webinar)

Standing SSC

Joe Powers, *Chair*

Kai Lorenzen, *Vice Chair*

Lee Anderson

Benny Gallaway

Bob Gill

Robert Leaf

Camp Matens

Ken Roberts

Steven Scyphers

James Tolan

David Chagaris

Harry Blanchet

Will Patterson

Sean Powers

Reef Fish SSC

Jason Adriance
Judson Curtis
John Mareska

Mackerel SSC

Jason Adriance
John Mareska
Kari MacLauchlin-Buck

Socioeconomic SSC

Kari MacLauchlin-Buck
Andrew Ropicki

Council Staff

Ryan Rindone
Ava Lasseter
John Froeschke

Carrie Simmons

Bernie Roy
Charlotte Schiaffo
Jessica Matos

Presenters

Trish Clay, NMFS
Lisa Coburn, NMFS
Richard Cody, NMFS
Abigail Furnish, NMFS

Council Member

Patrick Banks

Others

Sepp Haukebo, EDF
Ashford Rosenberg, RFSA
Michael Norberg, FWC
Steven Atran
Eric Brazer

James Bruce

Robert Griffiths
Michael Hagen
Joseph Hudson
Mike Jepson, NMFS
Julien Lartigue, NMFS
Ian Lundgren, NMFS
David Nieland, LSU
Winfrey Norton, BOEM
Christina Package-Ward, NMFS
Kelly Anderson
Frank Helies, NMFS
Catherine Krikstan, NMFS
Charlotte Marin, FWC
Lauren O'Brien
Kellie Ralston
George Sedberry
Molly Stevens, NMFS
Costa Kouzounis