

**Standing, Reef Fish, Mackerel, and Shrimp SSC  
Meeting Summary  
Tampa, Florida  
August 2, 2018**

The meeting of the Standing, Reef Fish, Mackerel, and Shrimp SSC was convened at 8:00 am on August 2, 2018. The agenda was approved as written. The summary minutes of the May 31-June 1, 2018 Standing, Shrimp, Socioeconomic, and Reef Fish SSC meeting, the March 26-27, 2018 Standing, Shrimp, Socioeconomic, and Reef Fish SSC meeting, and the January 10-11, 2017 Standing, Mackerel, Reef Fish, and Socioeconomic SSC meeting were approved as written.

Dr. Luiz Barbieri agreed to serve as the SSC representative at the August 20-23, 2018 Council meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas.

*Overview of Revised SEDAR Process*

Dr. Julie Neer (SEDAR) provided an overview of the forthcoming changes to the SEDAR stock assessment process. SEDAR was designed to provide an open, transparent process to conduct and review stock assessments for species in the southeast region. This process includes both peer-review and a thorough documentation of the methods and data used in an assessment. The process includes several types of assessments that vary in complexity and timeliness. Previously, these types were benchmark (most thorough), standard (most common), update (most timely), but have now been reorganized as research track, operational, and interim analysis. The research track assessment is open to new data sources, methods and modeling approaches. However, the resulting assessment does not produce management advice; rather, it is used as a framework for an operational assessment. The operational assessments fill the role of standard and update assessments in the previous paradigm. Operational assessments can typically be completed within 3-6 months and use the procedure defined in a research track assessment, but may include updated data streams. The operational assessment is expected to provide stock status and harvest advice similar to the previous standard and update assessments.

SEDAR is also working on a 'key stocks' planning tool which will help identify the primary stocks in a fishery, so that they can be regularly assessed on a defined schedule. Finally, the new approach will also have an interim analyses track that can be used to update core information and projections, and can be completed outside of the SEDAR process. The guidance for an interim analysis should be part of a research (or future operational) track assessment, and the product will be reviewed by the SSC.

The modified SEDAR framework will also affect the role of the SSC in the assessment process. Additional responsibility will be placed on the analysts, Council staff, and SSC to define terms of reference, assessment schedules, and lists of participants, and is based loosely on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center SAW/SARC approach. Dr. Neer stated the new process will be used to assess Gulf and South Atlantic Scamp (SEDAR 68), which will first be done as a research track assessment and be followed by an operational assessment. Operational assessments will be conducted for Gulf Gag and Greater Amberjack in 2020/21. The SSC noted that the revised SEDAR

process will likely require further modification as the process is deployed and challenges are discovered. As such, the SSC requests that the SEDAR schedule be added as a recurring topic for future SSC meetings.

## **Standing and Mackerel SSC**

### *Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Cobia Size and Possession Limits*

Dr. Jeff Isely (SEFSC) presented updated catch-per-unit-effort (CPUE) indices for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) migratory group Cobia (Gulf Cobia). An examination of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) CPUE data (retained catch and live discards) did not identify a downward trend in CPUE since the last stock assessment on Gulf Cobia which used data through 2010, nor was there a downward trend during the time period in which the Council has received reports from anglers about a generally poorer condition of Gulf Cobia (2016 – 2018). The headboat CPUE index (retained catch only) did identify a downward trend since the SEDAR 28 stock assessment; however, an SSC member noted that such a decline could be attributable to a change in behavior of headboat operators. However, an SSC member also stated that the headboat CPUE index could alternatively be viewed as a sort of fishery-independent survey of Cobia, since headboats do not directly target Cobia. Commercial indices of abundance were not used in the SEDAR 28 stock assessment because of confounding issues between the possession and size limits in those data, and as such were not included in the updated CPUE analyses.

Committee members asked from where and from whom the declines in abundance were being reported. Staff noted that anglers throughout the Gulf had reported issues with the health of the Gulf Cobia stock, including private anglers and for-hire vessel operators. It was proposed that an examination of the change in the size of fish landed over time could detect recruitment failure; such an analysis has not been developed for Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) Framework Amendment 7. The SSC recognized that the Council was taking pre-emptive action to address the concerns voiced by anglers, and commented on a similar action which was attempted, albeit too late, for the Port Royal Sound, SC population of Atlantic migratory group Cobia. There have been other cases in which management agencies have taken action to reduce harvest limits in response to stakeholder concerns about Cobia, including Virginia Marine Resources Commission (Chesapeake Bay) and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Gulf coast state waters). Although most Cobia in the Gulf are landed in federal waters, which is in contrast to the landings for the Atlantic migratory group, there is precedent of agency action in response to stakeholder concerns prior to availability of supporting biological data.

The SSC discussed the actions and alternatives in CMP Framework Amendment 7. The SSC noted that Cobia larger than the minimum size limit are often gaffed, and that increasing the minimum size limit could have a negative effect on discard mortality as anglers adjust to an increased minimum size limit. Staff added that when landing larger Cobia, such as those nearing or larger than 40 inches FL, anglers will use tail ropes and slings (amongst other methods) to land those larger fish, as gaffing them can be dangerous. An examination of the proposed alternatives and their effects on the predicted percent reduction in landings showed that increasing the minimum size limit would have the greatest effect at reducing both landings and fishing mortality; whereas, reducing only the possession limit would result in a considerably smaller reduction in

landings and fishing mortality. The predicted percent reduction from the combination of the two management alternative types (size and possession limit) was largely driven by the proposed changes to the minimum size limit. In addition, there may be negative biological effects of higher minimum size limits due to possible change in the sex ratio when only larger fish are removed.

The next stock assessment of Gulf Cobia will be an update assessment in 2019, during which the modeling environment and parameterization from SEDAR 28 will be updated and include the most recent years of data. A motion that would have found the analysis in the framework action adequate for Council consideration, and the alternatives reasonable interim actions until the update assessment is available, failed by a vote of 4-13. However, if the Council's objective is to reduce fishing mortality, the SSC stated that an increase in the minimum size limit would provide the greatest benefit of the alternatives considered in CMP Framework Amendment 7. The action alternatives which lower the possession limit would also reduce fishing mortality; however, the magnitude is far less than potential increases in the minimum size limit. The SSC found the impact analyses in CMP Framework Amendment 7 to be scientifically sound and appropriate for the management objective to reduce fishing mortality for Gulf Cobia. However, the SSC did not make a specific recommendation as to the degree to which any of the proposed management alternatives was preferable, as this management decision is best determined by the Council given the data provided.

## **Standing, Reef Fish, and Shrimp SSC Session**

### *Shrimp Effort Threshold Reduction*

Dr. Matt Smith (SEFSC) presented the results of the Council's request to investigate the effect of decreasing the juvenile Red Snapper bycatch threshold in the shrimp fishery. In Joint Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14, the effort for shrimp was constrained to a 74% reduction from the benchmark years of 2001-2003 in the area monitored for juvenile Red Snapper bycatch (10 to 30- fathom area in the Gulf [Statistical Subzones 10-21]). This effort reduction threshold was reduced to 67% in 2011. The current analysis used projections and assumptions from SEDAR 52 (Gulf Red Snapper). Conclusions were based on Gulf-wide increases in shrimp effort (as opposed to the area specifically monitored for juvenile Red Snapper bycatch). The conclusions of the analysis were that increasing Gulf-wide shrimp effort (i.e., reducing the shrimp effort threshold to 60% of 2001 – 2003 average levels) would be unlikely to substantially impact ABCs for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper. The SSC discussed the information presented and made the following motion:

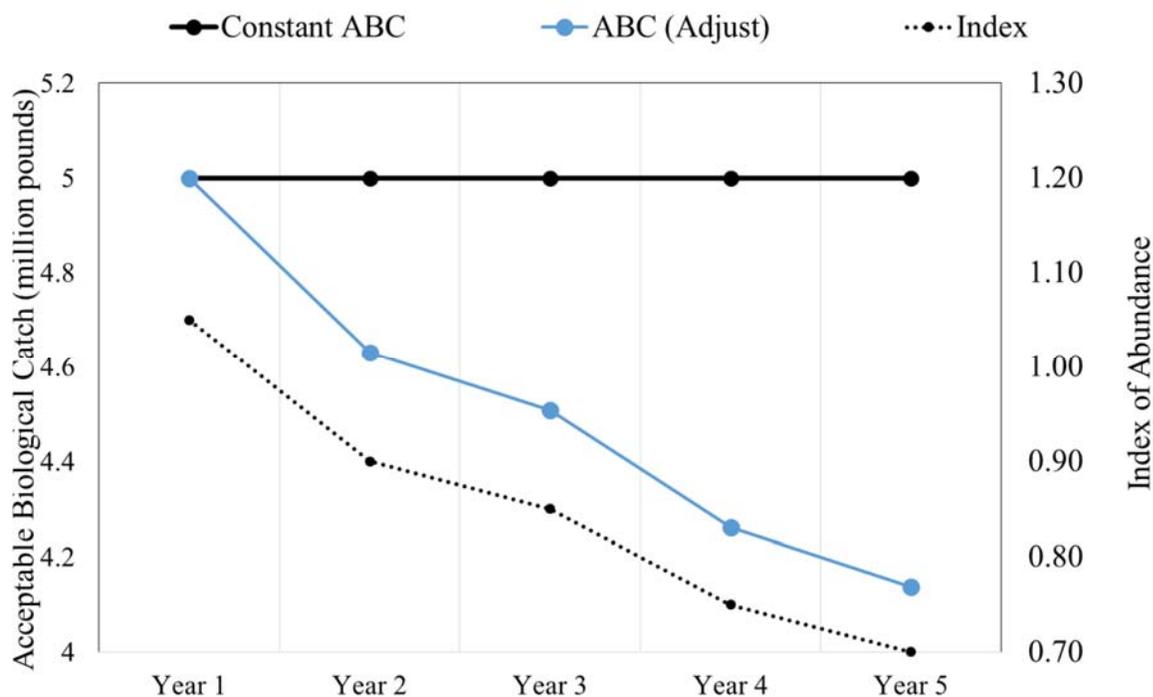
**Motion: The SSC accepts the shrimping effort threshold reduction analysis provided by the SEFSC as the best scientific information available, and concludes that changing the shrimp effort reduction threshold to 60% in the area monitored for juvenile Red Snapper (stat zones 10-21, 10-30 fathoms) is unlikely to significantly impact yield streams associated with rebuilding Red Snapper by 2032.**

Motion passed unanimously.

## Standing and Reef Fish SSC Session

### *Procedure for Red Grouper Interim Analysis*

Dr. Skyler Sagarese (SEFSC) presented a proposed framework for interim analysis for red grouper via webinar. The purpose of this analysis was to describe an empirical management procedure that could be used to adjust the ABC based on updated data that were not included in the most recent stock assessment. An empirical management procedure, defined as a set of formal actions to make a short-term harvest decision, was considered most appropriate approach to adjust ABC between operational stock assessments based on updated/new data. This procedure would allow the SSC to update the ABC recommendation based on an updated index of abundance (or other appropriate data), noting that the process could consider uncertainty and limit the magnitude of change within a specified time period. A hypothetical example was provided (Figure 1) to describe the process where the ABC that was established based on a stock assessment could be updated using more recent information such as an updated index of abundance. In the example provided, the index of abundance was declining relative to the final year of the assessment data, and the ABC values were adjusted as a result. The SSC noted that this procedure was bi-directional (i.e., could be applied to increasing as well as decreasing indices of abundance), and that limits in the magnitude of change allowed for a specified time period could be specified by the Council.



**Figure 1.** A hypothetical example that demonstrates how a constant ABC yield stream (black line) based on a stock assessment could be modified based on new information. This example includes a declining index of abundance (dotted black line) and the adjusted ABC (blue line) that incorporates the new index information. In this example, the ABC would be reduced (relative to the constant ABC) based on the declining index of abundance.

The SEFSC will continue development of the process to consider multiple indices or identify indices that are most informative. A management strategy evaluation (MSE) is necessary to evaluate the robustness of the proposed approach in terms of allowable harvest and compliance with MSA guidelines and efficiency of the process. The SEFSC staff will bring a revised report including preliminary results from an MSE to the October 2018 SSC meeting for review. The SSC asked if it was possible to include additional information in the interim analyses that would more closely match the complexity of the fishery. The SEFSC indicated that consideration of more information is possible but at the cost of efficiency and timeliness of the advice which is a primary objective of this type of analysis.

Once the MSE is reviewed and necessary changes are included, the interim analysis could be updated frequently in a timely process without the need to repeat the MSE. This could allow for more timely advice that includes more current information than is possible in the current stock assessment and management process.

#### *Council Staff Proposed Modifications to the SEDAR Process*

Staff reviewed the proposed modifications to the SEDAR schedule as developed by Council staff in consultation with multiple SEDAR partners. Staff clarified that this request came directly from the Council in 2017, and the resulting recommendations were developed alongside, but not along with, the changes proposed by the research/operational track process proposed by the SEFSC. The Council has already endorsed the research track/operational assessment process, and will see Scamp assessed using this new process. Some of the recommendations made by staff are already incorporated components of this new process, while others are not.

The SSC asked about the feasibility of an interdisciplinary team-style approach for the assessment workshop portion of the stock assessment process, whereby analysts and other experts could meet on an *ad hoc* basis to make decisions which would be reviewed later at a publicly noticed webinar. SEDAR staff clarified that this process is already in place; however, a large expansion of it could save considerable time during the assessment process by allowing decisions to be made more quickly, as opposed to having to wait for a publicly noticed webinar for clearance on every decision. The SSC thought that the proposed changes were reasonable, but pointed out that some may be more difficult to implement than others, especially those not already incorporated into the research track/operational assessment process.

#### *Red Snapper Stock Assessment Schedule*

Staff discussed the current SEDAR assessment schedule for the years 2020 and 2021, focusing on the type and timing of assessment for Red Snapper. The Gulf SEDAR schedule currently has Red Snapper scheduled for a research track assessment in 2020 followed by an operational assessment in 2021. The SSC discussed whether or not a research track stock assessment is necessary for Red Snapper. The research track assessment is the most comprehensive; however, it would not provide management advice, and would require a subsequent operational assessment (anticipated to be completed the following year) to provide management advice. Research track assessments may be appropriate when new information is available that is not encompassed within the current model framework. The SSC discussed whether there is (or will be) enough new information to warrant a

research track assessment (e.g., ‘Great Red Snapper Count’, lionfish information, and results from oil spill impacts studies) but this information may not be available by 2020 as currently scheduled.

The SSC also discussed the SEDAR schedule process more generally, noting that the current schedule consumes more analytical time (i.e., data weeks) than is available for the Gulf in 2020 and 2021. The SSC would benefit from additional information about the number of data weeks required for each species to be reviewed at the October 2018 SSC meeting. This would allow further discussion of the SEDAR schedule and may allow the SSC to provide advice on the timing and need of assessments for various Gulf stocks.

#### SEDAR 64 Project schedule

Dr. Julie Neer (SEDAR staff) reviewed the project schedule for the southeastern US Yellowtail Snapper stock assessment. The terms of reference and assessment schedule were approved previously by the SSC, but SSC appointments were delayed until this meeting as the SSC was re-populated by the Council at its June 2018 Council meeting.

The following SSC members were selected to serve on the SEDAR 64 Southeastern US Yellowtail Snapper stock assessment:

Data workshop: **Jim Nance, Steven Scyphers, and Jim Tolan** (February 2019)

Assessment workshop: **Bob Gill, Steven Scyphers** (webinars: April-August 2019)

Review workshop: **Kai Lorenzen, Joe Powers** (Gulf provides chair; October 2019)

#### Specify the TORs for the 2020 Operational Assessments for Gag and Greater Amberjack

Discussion of this item was moved to a future SSC meeting.

#### Review of Gray Snapper Global SPR Analysis

In response to a Council request for an analysis of alternative gray snapper MSY proxies, Dr. Isely presented an analysis of the projected OFL and ABC yield streams for 2016-2023 for the gray snapper stock under a range of MSY proxies ranging from the yield at  $F_{23\% \text{ SPR}}$  (corresponding to SPR at maximum yield per recruit) to the yield at  $F_{40\% \text{ SPR}}$  (the SPR level recommended by Harford et al. (in review) for gonochoristic stocks). In addition, the spawning stock biomass (SSB) was compared to alternative minimum stock size thresholds (MSST) of  $(1-M) \cdot \text{SSB}_{\text{MSY proxy}}$  and  $0.5 \cdot \text{SSB}_{\text{MSY proxy}}$  for overfished status determination. For gray snapper, the natural mortality rate (M) is 0.15. The projections assumed a constant F, a spawner-recruit steepness value of 1.0, and selectivity and retention parameters retained at the average of the three most recent assessment years (2013-2015).

Projection results indicated that, at proxies of  $F_{26\% \text{ SPR}}$  or higher, overfishing was occurring in 2015. However, when fishing at a constant  $F_{\text{SPR}}$ , overfishing was projected to end by 2020 (Table 1). At proxies less than  $F_{26\% \text{ SPR}}$ , overfishing was not occurring.

**Table 1.** Gray snapper overfishing status under different SPR based proxies. Shaded cells indicate overfishing is occurring. Terminal year of assessment (2015) is in bold italics.

F/FSPR target													
YEAR	SPR23	SPR24	SPR25	SPR26	SPR27	SPR28	SPR29	SPR30	SPR32	SPR34	SPR36	SPR38	SPR40
<b>2015</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>1.25</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>1.42</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>1.61</b>
2019	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01
2020	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2021	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2022	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
2023	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Overfished status depends upon the selection of MSST. If  $MSST = (1-m)*SSB_{MSY\ proxy}$ , at proxies of  $F_{25\%}$  SPR or higher the stock was overfished in 2015 (Table 2), and would require a rebuilding plan. Under an overfished determination, the ABC yield stream to rebuild the stock will require specification of rebuild target and year by the Council.

**Table 2.** Gray snapper overfished status at  $MSST = (1-M)*SSB_{MSY\ proxy}$  under different SPR based proxies. Shaded cells indicated overfished status. Terminal year of assessment (2015) is in bold italics.

SSB/(1-M)*SSB <sub>MSY</sub>													
YEAR	SPR23	SPR24	SPR25	SPR26	SPR27	SPR28	SPR29	SPR30	SPR32	SPR34	SPR36	SPR38	SPR40
<b>2015</b>	<b>1.08</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>0.62</b>
2019	1.26	1.24	1.21	1.18	1.16	1.13	1.11	1.09	1.05	1.01	0.97	0.94	0.91
2020	1.26	1.24	1.22	1.20	1.17	1.15	1.14	1.12	1.08	1.05	1.02	0.99	0.96
2021	1.25	1.23	1.22	1.20	1.18	1.17	1.15	1.14	1.11	1.08	1.05	1.03	1.01
2022	1.24	1.23	1.21	1.20	1.19	1.18	1.16	1.15	1.13	1.10	1.08	1.06	1.04
2023	1.23	1.22	1.21	1.20	1.19	1.18	1.17	1.16	1.14	1.12	1.10	1.08	1.07

If  $MSST = 0.5*SSB_{MSY\ proxy}$ , the stock is not overfished under any SPR proxy (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Gray snapper overfished status at  $MSST = 0.5*SSB_{MSY\ proxy}$  under different SPR based proxies. SSB is above MSST at all proxies, therefore there are no shaded cells. Terminal year of assessment (2015) is in bold italics.

SSB/(0.5*SSB <sub>MSY</sub> )													
YEAR	SPR23	SPR24	SPR25	SPR26	SPR27	SPR28	SPR29	SPR30	SPR32	SPR34	SPR36	SPR38	SPR40
<b>2015</b>	<b>1.84</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>1.69</b>	<b>1.63</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>1.46</b>	<b>1.41</b>	<b>1.32</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>1.05</b>
2019	2.15	2.10	2.06	2.01	1.97	1.93	1.89	1.85	1.78	1.72	1.66	1.60	1.55
2020	2.15	2.11	2.07	2.03	2.00	1.97	1.93	1.90	1.84	1.79	1.74	1.69	1.64
2021	2.13	2.10	2.07	2.04	2.02	1.99	1.96	1.94	1.89	1.84	1.80	1.75	1.71
2022	2.11	2.09	2.07	2.04	2.02	2.00	1.98	1.96	1.92	1.88	1.84	1.81	1.77
2023	2.09	2.08	2.06	2.04	2.02	2.01	1.99	1.97	1.94	1.91	1.88	1.85	1.82

Some SSC members questioned the use of a steepness = 1.0 rather than 0.99 which was used in the SEDAR 51 assessment. Although the values are close, a steepness of 1.0 prevents estimation of MSY and requires the use of an MSY proxy for management advice. Dr. Isely thought the results were close enough to be useful for evaluation. The SSC then discussed what recommendation to make for an MSY proxy. One member suggested that  $F_{40\%}$  SPR be used based on the report by Harford et al. (in review). Other SSC members noted that  $F_{30\%}$  SPR was used as the proxy in the SEDAR 51 stock assessment. They thought that none of the analyses presented provided support

for recommending any change in that proxy. In the absence of a consensus for a specific recommendation, all SSC members agreed that the proxy should not be any lower than  $F_{30\% SPR}$ , and passed the following motion:

**Motion: The SSC recommends not adopting any  $F_{MSY}$  proxy below  $F_{30\% SPR}$ . (gray snapper).**

Motion carried unanimously.

The SSC then discussed what MSST level to recommend. They noted that the Council recently adopted  $0.5 * SSB_{MSY proxy}$  for seven reef fish stocks in Amendment 44, but it has traditionally used  $(1-M) * SSB_{MSY proxy}$ . Staff explained that the Council had adopted  $0.5 * SSB_{MSY proxy}$  because it felt that the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT) was more conservative than any of the MSST proxies. The MFMT would drive management actions more than the MSST, and this level of MSST would allow more flexibility in management. An SSC member observed that if the MSST was too restrictive, it might result in overfished determinations as a result of natural fluctuations. However, other SSC members felt that the use of  $(1-M) * SSB_{MSY proxy}$  was supported by the guidance given in Restrepo et al. (1998), and by the fact that it is the level that has traditionally been used. The SSC passed the following motion:

**Motion: The SSC recommends that for gray snapper the MSST =  $(1-M)B_{MSY proxy}$ .**

Motion carried 14-3.

#### Draft Reef Fish Amendment 48/Red Drum Amendment 5

Staff presented a revised infographic reference sheet to accompany the draft amendment during reviews, which was intended to help explain the technical terms used in the amendment. The graphics in the top of the sheet, representing stock status and MSST, have been improved based on input from the SSC and others, and now do a good job of representing these concepts. However, the lower half, which previously contained a flow chart to illustrate the relationships between MSY, MSST, MFMT, and other reference points that was confusing to many, has been replaced by a pictorial graphic that attempts to integrate stock size, fishing mortality, MSY, OY, and MFMT, and MSST into a single representation. In internal staff reviews, this pictorial has received mixed reviews and observations that it incorrectly portrays some of the linkages. Staff asked SSC members to contact her if they had any suggestions for improving the graphic.

For the draft amendment, staff reviewed revisions to Action 1 (MSY proxies) that were made following the previous SSC review in June. Council, SERO, and SEFSC staff had formed an *ad hoc* MSY Proxies Working Group to hold a conference call following the June SSC meeting in order to address the SSC's concerns with Action 1 and to develop revised alternatives. A summary of that conference call was included in the SSC meeting materials. As a result of that conference call and the SSC's comments, an alternative was added to Sub-Action 1.1 (MSY proxies for assessed stocks) to provide a method similar to that included in the South Atlantic Council's Snapper-Grouper Amendment 24, whereby the SSC would recommend an MSY proxy, and the Council would then adopt it by a notation in a plan amendment. A range of alternatives would be

unnecessary because any MSY proxy other than the SSC's recommendation would not be based on the best scientific information available, and would not comply with National Standard 2. For the same reason, alternatives were removed that would have allowed the Council to set MSY proxies at the yield at  $F_{40\% \text{ SPR}}$  or  $F_{50\% \text{ SPR}}$  regardless of SSC recommendations.

Staff reviewed further changes to sub-action 1.2 (MSY proxies for stock complexes) and Sub-action 1.3 (MSY proxies for unassessed stocks), and noted that new sub-actions had been added as Sub-action 1.4 (MSY proxy for goliath grouper) and Sub-action 1.5 (MSY proxy for red drum). With respect to Sub-action 1.2 (MSY proxies for stock complexes), an SSC member asked what would happen if the Council chose to use an indicator stock for a stock complex status, but there was more than 1 stock that could be used as an indicator species. Another SSC member noted that the Caribbean Council uses stock complexes with multiple indicator species, and they average the stock status of those species for a stock complex result.

With respect to sub-action 1.3 (MSY proxies for unassessed stocks) a question came up during the MSY Proxies Working Group conference call as to how accurate the ABC control rule Tier 3 methods were in determining values that could be used as MSY proxies. To evaluate this question, Dr. John Froeschke and Dr. John Walter conducted a comparison of the ABCs from recently assessed stocks with the OFL values that would have resulted from a Tier 3 method. The results suggested that the Tier 3 method produced results that were reasonably close to the assessment values. One SSC member noted that, when using the Tier 3 method, the selection of years to use as a base was critical to the results.

A new sub-action 1.4 was added for goliath grouper that contained an alternative to set the MSY proxy at 800 fish based on analysis conducted by Clay Porch and Luiz Barbieri (2007) and presented to the Council that suggested that this might be an appropriate take of goliath grouper at  $F_{50\% \text{ SPR}}$ . An additional alternative was added to set the goliath grouper MSY proxy at the yield at  $F_{50\% \text{ SPR}}$ , but this proxy would not be measurable without a stock assessment.

A new sub-action 1.5 was added for red drum that contained an alternative to set the MSY proxy at the yield corresponding to a 30% escapement of juvenile red drum to the spawning stock biomass. This proxy is measurable, but each state has a different way of measuring escapement, so escapement estimates are not consistent across the Gulf. An additional alternative was added to set the red drum MSY proxy at the yield at  $F_{30\% \text{ SPR}}$ , but because federal waters, if opened, would have a different selectivity than state waters, this proxy would not be measurable without a Gulf-wide stock assessment.

Due to time constraints, staff skipped reviews of Action 2 (MSST) and Action 3 (MFMT) other than a brief overview. Staff reviewed the alternatives in Action 4 (Optimum Yield). Alternative 2 would set OY as the yield at a fixed percentage of  $F_{\text{MSY proxy}}$ , which infers that economic, ecological, and social factors are implicitly accounted for. Alternative 3 would explicitly account for such factors by the use of a decision tool that ranks several economic, ecological, and social factors to determine a buffer between MSY and OY. The decision tool being constructed by staff is based on the stock prioritization tool developed by the Science Center, which included such factors, but is still under development. One SSC member suggested that, given the complexity of trying to account for factors that are not all scientific, OY should be set at 75% of  $F_{\text{MSY}}$  unless

there are other considerations. OY doesn't have a single definition, and that rather than talk about OY, we should talk about a target, which is a quota to stay away from OFL. Staff noted that the revised amendment would not be coming back to the Council for review until the October 2018 Council meeting.

Tentative 2018/2019 SSC Meeting Dates

Staff reviewed the schedule of tentative meeting 2019 SSC meeting dates with the Committee. Staff requested that SSC members review their schedules and inform staff of potential conflicts with the proposed meeting schedule.

Other Business

SEDAR staff reviewed the SEDAR 61 (Gulf Red Grouper) and SEDAR 62 (Gulf Gray Triggerfish) project schedules and informed the SSC that completion dates will be delayed until June 2019 for SEDAR 61 and August 2019 for SEDAR 62. The delays result from changes necessary because of revisions to the MRIP recreational data.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. on August 2, 2018.

**SSC Members Present**

**Standing SSC**

Luiz Barbieri, Chair  
Joe Powers, Vice-Chair  
Lee Anderson –via webinar  
David Chagaris  
Benny Gallaway  
Bob Gill  
Douglas Gregory  
Jeff Isely  
Walter Keithly  
Kai Lorenzen  
James Nance  
Will Patterson  
Ken Roberts – via webinar  
Steven Scyphers  
James Tolan

**Reef Fish SSC**

**Others**

Roy Crabtree, NMFS  
Sue Gerhart, NMFS  
Peter Hood, NMFS

Jason Adriance –via webinar  
Judson Curtis  
John Mareska

**Shrimp SSC**

Richard Burris – via webinar  
Thomas Shirley – via webinar

**Mackerel SSC**

Kari Maclauchlin Buck  
John Mareska

**Council Staff**

Steven Atran  
Matt Freeman  
John Froeschke  
Karen Hoak  
Morgan Kilgour  
Ava Lasseter  
Emily Muehlstein

Ryan Rindone  
Charlotte Schiaffo  
Carrie Simmons

**Presenters**

Skyler Sagarese –via webinar,  
NMFS/SEFSC  
Matt Smith, NMFS/SEFSC  
Jeff Isely, NMFS/SEFSC  
Julie Neer, SEDAR

**Council Member**

Leann Bosarge

Rich Malinowski, NMFS  
Skyler Sagarese, NMFS/SEFSC –via webinar  
Matt Smith, NMFS/SEFSC  
Julie Neer, SEDAR  
Michael Drexler, Ocean Conservancy  
Jason Delacruz

## References

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