

**Standing and Reef Fish SSC Webinar Summary
May 10, 2017**

Vermilion Snapper Overfishing Limit (OFL) and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Projections under a 26% Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR) Proxy

Staff noted that in Draft Amendment 47 (vermilion snapper maximum sustainable yield (MSY) proxy and annual catch limit (ACL)), the Council had selected the yield when fishing at F_{30% SPR} as the MSY proxy preferred alternative for vermilion snapper. However, the Council directed staff to add a new alternative (not preferred) that would set the MSY proxy as the yield at F_{26% SPR}. Staff asked the SEFSC to provide an alternate set of OFL and ABC yield projections based on 26% SPR in the event the Council chooses that alternative when it takes final action at the June Council meeting. Matt Smith reviewed the OFL and ABC yield streams based on 26% SPE, noting that they were produced identically to the way the 30% SPR yield stream was produced except for the change in MSY proxy.

Motion: The SSC moves that if the Council were to select an MSY proxy for vermilion snapper, to be 26%SPR, then OFL and ABC projections would be:

**OFL and ABC at MSY proxy of 26% SPR
All yields in millions of pounds whole weight**

Year	OFL	ABC (0.75 * F26%SPR)	Constant Catch ABC
2017	5.57	4.33	3.87
2018	4.86	4.02	3.87
2019	4.39	3.80	3.87
2020	4.11	3.65	3.87
2021	3.95	3.56	3.87
Equil.	3.72	3.40	

Motion carried without opposition.

SSC members noted that in June 2016 the SSC had recommended the yield at the fishing mortality rate of 30% SPR as the most appropriate proxy for MSY. The above motion does not change that recommendation.

Review of Draft Underharvest Carry-over Options

Staff reviewed the draft amendment to create a carry-over provision in the Council’s ABC Control Rule, and the accompanying changes to the framework procedures for the Council’s Fishery Management Plans. Generally, SSC members understood the Council’s intent, which is to utilize all of the ACL for qualifying species whenever possible. The draft amendment is divided into sections: (1) to which species a carry-over provision would apply; (2) application of the carry-over provision to IFQ species; (3) fixing a buffer between the OFL and ABC for carry-over years; (4) adjustments to the carry-over for natural mortality and management uncertainty; and (5) framework procedure modifications.

An SSC member questioned whether episodic events such as hurricanes should be considered when applying a carry-over, to account for the inability to access the fishery, as opposed to the inability to harvest all that has been allowed in a given fishing year. However, in most circumstances, the amount of unused ACL in a fishing year which could be carried over to the following fishing year would be only a small fraction of the total ACL. Bearing this in mind, the SSC was in general agreement that a simulation of the effect of carrying unused ACL over to the following fishing year should be conducted, and emphasized the need for that simulation to demonstrate the effect of multiple instances of the carry-over provision in effect within a single rebuilding timeline for overfished stocks.

An SSC member questioned whether it would also be appropriate to consider a larger carry-over than the amount of unused ACL from the previous fishing year, accounting for growth and reproduction benefits borne by the subject species due to the foregone yield in the previous fishing year. Staff remarked that such an approach was not currently being considered, is not provided for in the revised National Standard 1 Guidelines, and would be considerably more time-intensive than the current approach.

An SSC member proposed incorporating the adjustment for natural mortality into the adjustment for management uncertainty. Staff indicated that the varied levels of natural mortality amongst species managed by the Council would make such an approach more difficult, in that a “universal” adjustment incorporating natural mortality would disproportionately affect many stocks.

Recognizing that the carry-over amendment is in early stages of development the SSC requested to review future document updates, especially in light of the simulations the Committee requested above. The SSC thought that review of these simulations would allow the Committee to better evaluate the different outcomes and trade-offs of the various options in this amendment.

Status Determination Criteria Options Paper

Staff reviewed an early draft of an options paper for a generic amendment to define status determination criteria (SDC) and optimum yield (OY). The options paper includes actions to define MSY proxies, MSST for stocks not included in Amendment 44 (which addresses possible MSST revisions for stocks that currently have MSST defined), MFMT, and OY. The options paper currently includes all finfish managed solely by the Gulf Council (reef fish plus red drum), but does not include coastal migratory pelagics (which would require a joint amendment with the South Atlantic Council) or invertebrate species (shrimp, spiny lobster). SDC has been addressed for shrimp (Shrimp Amendment 15 and 17B) and for spiny lobster (Spiny Lobster Amendment 10).

The SSC’s discussion primarily concerned OY. Some SSC members noted that OFL, ABC, ACL, and ACT are currently utilized reference points. They questioned whether it was necessary to address OY since it does not seem to be part of current management. Staff responded that OY was part of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and therefore its role in management needed to be addressed. However, there are two types of OY: 1) a long-term average catch, analogous to MSY; or 2) an annual OY, analogous to OFL. When used as an annual OY, the NS1 guidelines state that the annual OY cannot

exceed the ACL. SSC members noted that the Magnuson-Stevens Act definition of OY includes a socio-economic component. The formula frequently used for OY for management consideration (yield at $0.75 * F_{MSY}$), while simple for assessment purposes, does not address social or economic considerations. Furthermore, in some situations, this definition of OY could exceed the ACL in some years.

It was suggested that the inclusion of socioeconomic considerations in OY be discussed at the Council level and by Advisory Panels in order to determine objectives and policy. Those objectives could then be converted to numbers by the SSC. It might be necessary to consider what factors apply to setting of OY on a stock-by-stock basis. For example, with shrimp, MSY was reduced to take into consideration minimizing sea turtle mortality. An SSC member suggested that OY is often regarded in the context of achieving the greatest economic return rather than in the context of some yield below MSY, inferring that economic considerations should be more a part of the management process than they appear. Addressing OY from this perspective may require a different management style than what is currently in place.

One SSC member noted that he had attended a workshop a few years ago on National Standard 1 and OY¹. He suggested that the speakers at that workshop (Rick Methot, NOAA Fisheries, and Galen Tromble, NOAA Fisheries) be invited to attend an SSC meeting where OY is discussed.

The Webinar concluded at 3:30 p.m.

SSC Members Present

Standing SSC

Luiz Barbieri, Chair
Joe Powers, V. Chair
Lee Anderson
Harry Blanchet
Benjamin Blount
Mary Christman
Bob Gill
Jack Isaacs

Jeff Isely
Walter Keithly
Kai Lorenzen
Will Patterson
Ken Roberts
Steven Scyphers
Robert Shipp
James Tolan

Reef Fish SSC

Robert Ellis
John Mareska

Council Staff

Steven Atran
Jessica Matos
Ryan Rindone
Bernadine Roy
Charlotte Schiaffo
Carrie Simmons

Others

Matt Smith

Council Representative

Leann Bosarge

plus 16 others in attendee (listen only) mode.

¹ Fisheries Leadership & Sustainability Forum: Optimum Yield & National Standard 1 (September 4-7, 2012)
<http://www.fisheriesforum.org/our-work/fisheries-forums/wcf-2012>