

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE

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5
6 Golden Nugget Casino Hotel Biloxi, Mississippi

7
8 March 30, 2015

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11 **VOTING MEMBERS**

12 Kevin Anson.....Alabama
13 Pamela Dana.....Florida
14 John Greene.....Alabama
15 Harlon Pearce.....Louisiana

16
17 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

18 Martha Bademan (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
19 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
20 Doug Boyd.....Texas
21 Jason Brand.....USCG
22 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
23 Dale Diaz (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
24 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
25 Campo Matens.....Louisiana
26 Corky Perret.....Mississippi
27 Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
28 John Sanchez.....Florida
29 Greg Stunz.....Texas
30 David Walker.....Alabama
31 Roy Williams.....FLorida

32
33 **STAFF**

34 Stephen Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
35 Assane Diagne.....Economist
36 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist/Statistician
37 Doug Gregory.....Executive Director
38 Karen Hoak.....Administrative and Financial Assistant
39 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
40 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
41 Cathy Readinger.....Administrative Officer
42 Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
43 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
44 Charlotte Schiaffo.....Research & Human Resource Librarian
45 Bryan Schoonard.....GIS Analyst

46
47 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

48 Pam Anderson.....Panama City, FL

1 Randy Boggs.....Orange Beach, AL
2 Steve Branstetter.....NMFS
3 J.P. Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
4 Michael Drexler.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
5 Cynthia Fenyk.....NOAA
6 Martin Fisher.....FL
7 Chuck Guilford.....FL
8 Ken Haddad.....American Sportfishing Association, Lloyd, FL
9 Chad Hanson.....Pew Environmental Trusts
10 Betty Harder.....FL
11 Ben Hartig.....SAFMC
12 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA, FL
13 Kristin McConnell.....EDF, Austin, TX
14 Jack McGovern.....NMFS
15 George Niles.....Summerland Key, FL
16 Daniel Padron.....Key West, FL
17 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC
18 Jenny Thompson.....Oceana, Lafayette, LA
19 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL

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23 The Gulf SEDAR Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
24 Management Council convened at the Golden Nugget Casino Hotel,
25 Biloxi, Mississippi, Monday afternoon, March 30, 2015, and was
26 called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Chairman Kevin Anson.

27
28 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
29 **APPROVAL MINUTES**
30 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
31

32 **CHAIRMAN KEVIN ANSON:** Committee members are myself and Dr. Dana
33 is here and Harlon Pearce and Johnny Greene is here and so Item
34 Number I is Adoption of the Agenda. Any changes to the agenda?
35 Moving on to Item Number II, Approval of Minutes, does anyone
36 have any changes to the minutes?

37
38 **MR. HARLON PEARCE:** Motion that we approve.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** We have a motion to approve the agenda as
41 written and it's seconded. Approval of Minutes, does anyone
42 have any comments on minutes? Does anybody want to adopt the
43 minutes?

44
45 **MR. PEARCE:** I will adopt the minute as written.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Is there a second?
48

1 **MR. GREENE:** Second.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Any discussion? No. Action Guide and Next
4 Steps is Tab I, Number 3. You see that in the briefing book.
5 We are just going to be reviewing the current SEDAR schedule.
6 Item Number IV, Tab I, Number 4, Mr. Rindone, do you want to
7 take us through that?

8
9 **SEDAR SCHEDULE REVIEW**

10
11 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few edits
12 to the schedule that I received early this morning from Julie
13 Neer for the goliath and black grouper assessments that are
14 going to be done by the State of Florida. I have those listed
15 as beginning in the spring of 2015 and they are actually going
16 to begin in the fall and they will be completed by the spring of
17 2016.

18
19 For the greater amberjack and gag updates, both of those are
20 going to start in the summer of 2016 and be available in early
21 2017 and that is using 2015 data and so it's the same principle
22 as with the last red snapper update assessment and try and start
23 them in early September and have them completed by January and
24 no later than March, so that the council can take action on any
25 changes and implement them before the fishing season ends.

26
27 Then for the data-limited stock assessment, the data workshop
28 for that is going to be in May and there are going to be
29 assessment webinars held June through August, using the same
30 style that we're currently using for red grouper, which is where
31 the assessment team can converse with SSC members and AP members
32 and other pertinent individuals behind the scenes, but all
33 decision making happens during plenary webinars, of which there
34 are usually no more than three or four, but it allows the public
35 to still be able to see what's going on.

36
37 Then the review workshop for that data-limited effort will be in
38 November of 2016 and so it should get to us in either the end of
39 November or probably our January meeting and the terminal year
40 of data for those species that are going to be looked at in the
41 data-poor effort would be 2014.

42
43 Outside of that, one of the outstanding issues that we have on
44 the schedule is in 2017, where the SSC had recommended that a
45 standard assessment of red snapper be done and the council still
46 needs to make a determination on whether that's an appropriate
47 spot to place that assessment or if it should happen sooner or
48 later than that time.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Any discussion on that particular item or any
3 other items on the schedule?
4

5 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUGLAS GREGORY:** I think at the last meeting
6 you said that we were supposed to get some species selections
7 for the data poor and have we gotten those?
8

9 **MR. RINDONE:** We have not received anything as yet from the
10 Science Center. We were told at the last meeting that they
11 would be giving us some insight on species that they thought
12 would be good candidates at this meeting and so I don't know if
13 Bonnie wants to weigh in on that.
14

15 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** Yes and thank you. We have done an
16 analysis based on data availability and ranked a suite of
17 species based on how strong a candidate they are for assessment
18 and what I have gotten from the analysts are about five
19 categories of data availability and suitability for a first
20 round of a data-poor stock composite.
21

22 Again, the notion is that we do a stock assessment, we typically
23 do an assessment focused on one stock and for this, we would be
24 applying modeling approaches that are less complex and because
25 of that, we are able to do more than one stock and so the stocks
26 that bubbled up as having the highest data quality are scamp and
27 gray snapper and you will note that they are also proposed on
28 the list for 2017 benchmark stock assessments and so that
29 comports that they have got adequate amounts of data to be
30 either put in that data-poor group or to be done as a benchmark.
31

32 In addition to that, we've got, in Category 1, lane snapper, the
33 red drum that's already listed, and wenchman. Category 2 are
34 the ones that are sort of next in terms of their data
35 availability and that's almaco jack, the lesser amberjack,
36 yellowmouth grouper, snowy grouper, and speckled hind. The
37 notion is that we could at least do the Category 1 and could
38 also include some of the Category 2 as we look at the data-poor
39 stocks in 2016. I can provide that list to you in written form
40 if that helps.
41

42 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Yes, if you could forward that list, that would
43 be great, Bonnie.
44

45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** What were some the broad
46 characteristics of these species for the different categories?
47 I assume abundance or prevalence in the catch or catch levels
48 was one of the issues.

1
2 **DR. PONWITH:** For the list that I am going to give you, we have
3 categorized them 1 through 5 and this is based solely on data
4 availability and by data availability, it's a combination of the
5 quality and quantity of fishery-dependent data, biological data,
6 and fishery-independent data.

7
8 By the time we get down to Category 4, the data are so sparse
9 that it's likely we wouldn't have enough information for
10 anything more than a catch-only-based method, like using
11 something like annual landings.

12
13 Again, the idea of the data-poor approach is right now, to meet
14 those ACL requirements that we had with the reauthorization of
15 Magnuson, we were required to have ACLs. For stocks that
16 weren't assessed, we used sort of an average landings approach
17 with a buffer applied and the notion is that for some of those
18 stocks we actually have enough data that we could include more
19 sophisticated analysis than just using annual landings. In
20 other words, we want to capitalize on what we have, even if it's
21 enough for a traditional stock assessment.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you, Bonnie. Ryan, do you have any other
24 comments?

25
26 **MR. RINDONE:** It's good to have a list to go off of. Dr.
27 Ponwith, how many species do you think it's reasonable for the
28 council to want to include for consideration in the data-poor
29 effort?

30
31 **DR. PONWITH:** I think that we can, at a minimum, include the
32 ones that we have that are Category 1, which amounts to five
33 stocks. The Category 2 amounts to five additional stocks and so
34 what I would say is let's look at those Category 1 stocks and
35 then of the Category 2 stocks, let's rank them in order of the
36 council's view of their importance from a management standpoint.

37
38 Then what we can do is as we get to that saturation point where
39 we think that's enough, but bordering on too many, if we can't
40 do all of the Category 2, at least they are prioritized.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Bonnie, what were those in Category 2 again?
43 They were almaco jack, lesser amberjack, snowy, speckled hind,
44 and what was the fifth one?

45
46 **DR. PONWITH:** It was almaco, lesser amberjack, yellowmouth
47 grouper, snowy grouper, and speckled hind.

1 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Is there, as far as grouping them together -- I
2 don't know how intense the workgroups would be or whether or not
3 there would be anybody that has any particular expertise with
4 jacks versus groupers, but is that a consideration? Should you
5 lump all the groupers together versus the jacks or can you pick
6 almaco and then yellowmouth and then lesser, in case it comes
7 down to picking three of the five or just a couple of the five?
8 Is there any consideration for that we need to be wary of?

9
10 **DR. PONWITH:** That's a reasonable question and what I would say
11 at this point is we have ranked these according to simply
12 whether they have got the data to support these data-poor
13 approaches and I think as you're ranking them in terms of your
14 perspectives from a management standpoint, I think that
15 annotating the ranking list just based on which ones you think
16 are the most important.

17
18 In other words, we often hear in public testimony that I am
19 really worried about this stock because or we've been seeing
20 lots of these because. That kind of information is valuable to
21 help us. That anecdotal information is really valuable in
22 helping us set these priorities.

23
24 Then we can tier those priorities against the logistics issues
25 and the science concerns, because sometimes the management and
26 science concerns are identical and sometimes there is some
27 departures. That would give us the information I think we need
28 to actually interleave that.

29
30 **MR. PEARCE:** Bonnie, all things being equal and if we had the
31 data necessary to do all ten stocks, how many is too many? I
32 mean I think ten is too many, of course, but what is your upper
33 number of how many fish you can do?

34
35 **DR. PONWITH:** I think we can do at least five and anything more
36 than ten is going to be too many and the sweet spot is somewhere
37 between five and ten.

38
39 **MR. PEARCE:** So we could do seven or eight then is what you're
40 saying and that's good.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Does the committee want to offer any guidance
43 or any species that they want to rank for the Category 2 fish?
44 Certainly I can recall quite a few folks that have testified for
45 speckled hind and snowy. Those tend to probably be a little bit
46 more of a target species, I think, if you will, relative to the
47 other fish in the reef fish complex.

48

1 I mean my druthers would be to concentrate on the yellowmouth,
2 snowy, and speckled hind and then almaco and lesser would be
3 where I would pick.

4
5 **MR. PEARCE:** I will make that motion, because I agree with you
6 that we concentrate on those three grouper types of yellowmouth,
7 speckled hind, and the other one, snowy.

8
9 **MR. RINDONE:** Mr. Chairman, I have, in order for priority for
10 Category 2, Number 1 is speckled hind and Number 2 is snowy
11 grouper and Number 3 is yellowmouth grouper and Number 4 is
12 almaco jack and Number 5 is lesser amberjack, just in the order
13 that you put them out.

14
15 **MR. PEARCE:** Do we need a motion?

16
17 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** I don't --

18
19 **MR. RINDONE:** It's already done.

20
21 **MR. PEARCE:** It's already done? Okay.

22
23 **MR. RINDONE:** So I guess the last thing on the list, in terms of
24 what you guys need to weigh in on, is if we can get the schedule
25 back up there. 2016 is proposed and so we will put the
26 council's priorities along with Dr. Ponwith's list for the
27 Category 1 species and our prioritized list for Category 2 for
28 the data-poor.

29
30 I will update the schedule to reflect the changes from Julie
31 that I told you guys about, but in 2017, we will have -- We have
32 a benchmark assessment for both gray snapper and scamp and so
33 with consensus, I will go ahead and I will remove those, since
34 those are going to be part of the data-poor effort, and that
35 will move yellowedge grouper up to the number one spot and red
36 snapper as a standard assessment, if that's where you guys want
37 that to be, to the number two spot for 2017. Do you guys have
38 any edits on that?

39
40 **DR. PONWITH:** 2017 is going to be that challenging year. As you
41 know, we are in the process of implementing the new effort mail
42 survey for the MRIP program and we are going to be collecting
43 those data side-by-side with the Coastal Household Telephone
44 Survey.

45
46 After we have accumulated a couple of years' worth of data, it
47 is then time to go ahead and evaluate how those two interacted
48 together, the behavior of the mail survey against the more

1 traditional survey that we're doing.
2
3 2017 is the year where we would build the calibration approach
4 and peer review that calibration approach and update the past
5 assessments so that we could get those assessment results in
6 terms of the calibrated effort.
7
8 My recommendation at this point is even if we do move the gray
9 snapper and scamp into those data-poor assessed stocks in 2016
10 that we don't plug anything additional into that year, because
11 that is going to be a very, very heavy year to do those updates.
12
13 **MR. RINDONE:** Dr. Ponwith, when you say don't plug anything
14 else, do you mean anything on top of yellowedge and red snapper
15 or anything on top of yellowedge?
16
17 **DR. PONWITH:** What I would say at this point is anything on top
18 of those and what I could -- At this stage, for 2017, you have
19 got red snapper there as a standard and certainly red snapper
20 would be a very high-priority stock to build into that
21 calibration. The calibrations are going to be conducted by
22 substituting these new calibrated data into the results of the
23 past assessment.
24
25 For red snapper, what you can do is by leaving that on the
26 schedule for 2017, look at, instead of doing that substitute, do
27 a more robust standard assessment.
28
29 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Dr. Ponwith. For the council, you guys
30 would just need to finalize it that yes, you do want to do red
31 snapper in 2017 and that's all we would need for that.
32
33 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** When we say 2017, is this something
34 we could do like we did with the update and have the result in
35 say January of 2017 or would we get the result at the end of
36 2017? If we could get it at the beginning of the year, since
37 that's two years away, that would be preferable.
38
39 **DR. PONWITH:** Let me get some clarity. You are asking for the
40 results of the red snapper assessment to be ready by the
41 beginning of 2017? That basically means doing it in 2016,
42 right?
43
44 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY:** Right and I was just asking if
45 that's possible. I mean what's the timeline here, because that
46 is two years away.
47
48 **DR. PONWITH:** Right now, if red snapper, a standard assessment,

1 is on the schedule for 2017, the notion would be that that
2 assessment would begin in 2017. I would have to actually take a
3 look at the timelines to be able to match them up and see, but
4 the idea of having results of a stock assessment early in 2017
5 isn't a 2017 assessment. That would be a 2016.

6
7 If I am hearing you right, the question is can we do a red
8 snapper standard assessment in 2016 and so the answer to that is
9 complicated by this calibration. If you did an assessment in
10 2016, the results would essentially be confounded by the fact
11 that you are not able to do it with the information that we're
12 going to be gaining for the calibration.

13
14 My advice would be to not do a red snapper standard assessment
15 in 2016, because you absolutely want that calibration built into
16 that assessment. My advice would be to advise against doing it
17 in 2016.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Bonnie, outside of the calibration and outside
20 of everything that a standard would -- I mean you could do an
21 update though of red snapper in 2016 without the calibration
22 numbers, correct? I understand it's a little extra work if you
23 do 2016 and then maybe wait until 2017 to come back, but is an
24 update snapper -- I mean would that be able to fit in and still
25 do some data-poor stocks?

26
27 **DR. PONWITH:** You are right that an update -- An update is
28 significantly different in terms of its scope than a standard
29 would be. What I have to find out is how far out you can do an
30 additional update and still be comfortable that -- It's a
31 complicated answer and it's because when you do an update, you
32 basically update the landings information and update the
33 indices. Let me -- Rather than speculate, let me double check
34 and find out what the analysts' comfort level would be with a
35 second update in 2016.

36
37 I will say that an update in 2016 couldn't be wedged into the
38 existing schedule and that something would have to give to be
39 able to accommodate that.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Yes and that would be with 2015 data and so
42 sometime in the summer and we would have it either in December
43 or the early part of 2017 and have that information available
44 for setting 2017 ACLs and everything. That's what I am trying
45 to get to and so maybe that summer -- Is it three months for an
46 update red snapper? Would it be a three-month process?

47
48 **DR. PONWITH:** It basically is a two-analyst process and it's

1 about a three-month process to be able to get that done and the
2 assessment this year, this most recent assessment, the timing of
3 the start was based on the intercept calibration. We had to
4 wait for that to be done and be peer reviewed before we were
5 able to have those numbers to include in the update.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you.

8
9 **MR. PEARCE:** Mr. Chairman, just to clarify, what you're getting
10 at is doing an update on snapper in 2016 and follow up with a
11 standard in 2017, right?

12
13 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Yes and essentially, the schedule would still
14 remain the same as far as what's proposed in 2017, but I am just
15 looking at the time period between the last assessment we just
16 had and then not getting any results until summer of 2018, which
17 then would affect the 2019 season. There is quite a few years
18 there and our recent results of update assessments have shown
19 that we've still been able to increase the quota and so just
20 with that in mind, what the hope is, it's that we would still be
21 able to realize an additional bump in quota and we would get a
22 bump in quota for a couple of years.

23
24 **MR. PEARCE:** Would Dr. Ponwith be able to bring this to full
25 council, the idea of whether she could do it or not? Could you
26 get that for full council, so we could, at that time, try to add
27 all this together? Right now, you want us to discuss the
28 standard in 2017, because that's not written in stone yet, is
29 it, and it's to be determined?

30
31 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Yes and I don't necessarily think we need to
32 get that set in stone. It's just going to be out there and
33 proposed, but with the anticipation that it's a realistic agenda
34 or schedule to keep it included in 2017, yes, but then some
35 impacts relative to maybe Category 2 species being assessed in
36 2016 and they may fall off to accommodate red snapper. Any
37 other discussion? Ryan, do you have anything else?

38
39 **MR. RINDONE:** No, Mr. Chairman, and thank you.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you. That concludes the SEDAR Committee,
42 if there is no other business.

43
44 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m., March 30, 2015.)

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47