

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2  
3 GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE

4  
5 Hilton Galveston Island Resort Galveston, Texas

6  
7 October 5, 2015

8  
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

10 Kevin Anson.....Alabama  
11 Pamela Dana.....Florida  
12 John Greene.....Alabama

13  
14 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

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

31  
32 **STAFF**

33 Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist  
34 Assane Diagne.....Economist  
35 John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist/Statistician  
36 Doug Gregory.....Executive Director  
37 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist  
38 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel  
39 Charlene Ponce.....Public Information Officer  
40 Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison  
41 Claire Roberts.....Essential Fish Habitat Specialist  
42 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager  
43 Charlotte Schiaffo.....Research & Human Resource Librarian  
44 Carrie Simmons.....Deputy Director

45  
46 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

47 Pam Anderson.....Panama City, FL  
48 Steve Branstetter.....NMFS

1 Eric Brazer.....Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholder's Alliance  
2 Bubba Cochran.....Galveston, TX  
3 Chris Conklin.....SAFMC  
4 Michael Drexler.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL  
5 Traci Floyd.....MDMR, MS  
6 Benny Gallaway.....LGL, TX  
7 Brad Gorst.....Palm Harbor, FL  
8 Marcie Jones.....EDF, Austin, TX  
9 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA, FL  
10 Rich Malinowski.....NMFS  
11 Kristen McConnell.....EDF  
12 Bart Niquet.....Lynn Haven, FL  
13 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC  
14 Clarence Seymour.....Biloxi, MS

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16 - - -  
17

18 The Gulf SEDAR Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
19 Management Council convened at the Hilton Galveston Island  
20 Resort, Galveston, Texas, Monday afternoon, October 5, 2015, and  
21 was called to order at 4:40 p.m. by Chairman Kevin Anson.

22  
23 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
24 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
25 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**  
26

27 **CHAIRMAN KEVIN ANSON:** If people can turn to Tab I, Number 1 for  
28 the SEDAR Committee agenda and is there any changes to the  
29 agenda, for those few members that are here? Is there any  
30 opposition to accepting the agenda as written? Seeing none, the  
31 motion to accept the agenda as written is carried. Approval of  
32 the Minutes, any changes to the minutes from the previous Gulf  
33 SEDAR Committee meeting?

34  
35 **DR. PAMELA DANA:** Move to approve.  
36

37 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** We have a motion to approve the minutes and a  
38 second from Johnny. With no opposition, the motion carries.  
39 The third item on the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps.  
40 That is Tab I, Number 3. You can review that if you haven't  
41 already and that will take us to Item Number IV, SEDAR Steering  
42 Committee Update, and Mr. Gregory.  
43

44 **SEDAR STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE**  
45

46 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The  
47 SEDAR Committee met on September 28 and 29, last week, and so we  
48 do not have a report and so I'm just going to give a verbal

1 summary.  
2  
3 There is two items, one pertaining to the stock assessment  
4 schedule, and we will wait until we get to Tab I, Number 4 and  
5 Ryan will summarize what we can recall from the discussion and  
6 how we're recommending changes to the stock assessment schedule.  
7  
8 Also, there is a new process being proposed by the Center for  
9 how to handle benchmark-like assessments and I will let Bonnie  
10 do that right after I finish.  
11  
12 The highlights of the meeting was, one, a report on the SEDAR  
13 Data Assessment Best Practices Workshop. This was needed  
14 because we've been having trouble getting data out of the data  
15 group, people, in a timely manner for the stock assessments to  
16 be done and it has delayed the completion of a number of the  
17 benchmark stock assessments.  
18  
19 This was a very productive meeting and they identified a project  
20 management scheduling type approach to handling these  
21 assessments and they also identified additional workshops to be  
22 conducted on specific issues. One was stock boundary, discard  
23 mortality, and this is in priority order from them, estimating  
24 commercial discards, indices construction, assessing the  
25 reproductive inputs and how they affect fishery management  
26 reference points, and to reconvene the Southeast U.S.  
27 Histological Workshops and also the maturity estimation methods.  
28  
29 Now, the Steering Committee, I think led by Dr. Crabtree and  
30 myself, thought that the assessment of reproductive inputs on  
31 determining what the reference points are for a stock was more  
32 important and we recommend moving that up in priority. I think  
33 number two, Bonnie, and was that what we concluded? Okay.  
34  
35 Also Bonnie reviewed the assessment program reviews that each of  
36 the Centers are going through nationally. Her Center has gone  
37 through a data review in 2013, a stock assessment review in  
38 2014, and has just completed this summer a review of protected  
39 species. She gave an overview of the data in the stock  
40 assessment reviews and, again, there will be more information in  
41 the final report when it comes out and we will distribute that  
42 to the council.  
43  
44 We spent a lot of time talking with Dr. Richard Methot on the  
45 NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Prioritization Tool and that's  
46 been mentioned here before and to the SSC and he wants to give  
47 the presentation to the SSC and we're going to try to schedule  
48 ours in January.

1  
2 He has revised it since the first time around and what he is  
3 looking for -- He has identified fourteen factors, such as  
4 commercial fishery importance, recreational importance,  
5 subsistence importance, rebuilding status, stock abundance,  
6 fishing mortality, key role in ecosystem, those sorts of things,  
7 as factors and he envisions having either the Southeast Center  
8 or the SSC being a group that scores the different factors for  
9 each species that we're managing and so each factor will get a  
10 score of one to five.

11  
12 Then he envisions another group, and it could be the council,  
13 the SEDAR Committee on the council, or some other subgroup of  
14 the council to assign weights to these various factors. Which  
15 of these factors are important to us as a council?

16  
17 The combination of scoring and weights would then set the  
18 prioritization for the stock assessments, but it was pointed out  
19 to him by a person on the South Atlantic Council that the  
20 council itself still has final say on what stock assessments  
21 they want done and so that is something that is -- I spoke up  
22 pretty strongly that I did not want this to become a burdensome  
23 process for our SSC.

24  
25 I did not want us to get into researching the various factors to  
26 see if we can come up with a score and I got the group to agree  
27 that the first time around we can have the SSC just intuitively  
28 develop some scores in one meeting and not have it take a year  
29 or two to do and see how it goes. I also asked them to do a  
30 simulation analysis to see if random scores would affect how the  
31 final prioritization came out.

32  
33 In other words, do the important species in our minds come out  
34 on top, no matter how you do it, because, intuitively, we know  
35 what's important and that would be interesting to see.

36  
37 The other thing, or the two other things, was the available  
38 stock assessment resources and then the project schedule that I  
39 mentioned. The only thing I want to say before Bonnie gives and  
40 overview of the stock assessment resources item, which she is  
41 suggesting that the Center concentrate on doing thorough  
42 research on species, like a thorough stock assessment, but not  
43 in a constricted timeframe for management purposes.

44  
45 The question for us is what's the benefit to us as a council?  
46 Will it increase the number of assessments we get? If it does,  
47 then this is like a no-brainer or, much like our transition  
48 under the SEDAR process, our transition to SS3, the stock

1 assessment, required benchmark assessments and that slowed us  
2 down and will this new system actually decrease the number of  
3 assessments in the short term, due to the need to do research  
4 cycles on all the species, or multiple species? That's  
5 something to keep in mind at the end of this.

6  
7 With that, that's a brief summary of what we talked about in a  
8 day. If there is any questions -- If there's not any questions,  
9 I will turn it over to Bonnie to explain the research cycle idea  
10 and it's very intriguing. Thank you.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** All right, Dr. Ponwith.

13  
14 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Our stock assessment  
15 scientists did a kind of little think-tanking about what are  
16 some things that we could do to improve the throughput of the  
17 stock assessment process and what are some of the challenges we  
18 have under the system as it is right now?

19  
20 I don't want to talk in too much detail, because right now the  
21 plan is we have talked to the SEDAR Steering Committee and  
22 gotten their approval to give a presentation on this idea, in  
23 fairly elaborate detail, to the SSCs and troubleshoot it with  
24 the SSCs and then have the SSCs carry their deliberations back  
25 to you at a future council meeting, but the thumbnail sketch of  
26 this is right now we have three types of assessments.

27  
28 We have a benchmark and we have a standard and we have an update  
29 and they are scaled in terms of how long they take and how  
30 elaborate they are from one, two, three.

31  
32 One of the things that we're talking about doing is creating a  
33 research track and an operational track assessment and a  
34 research track is if a stock has never been assessed before,  
35 there are a lot of questions that need answering. That's why we  
36 take our time in addressing those questions, to make sure that  
37 those questions can be asked and answered in the light of day in  
38 a public forum, because often it's where those judgment calls  
39 are made that influence how that stock assessment comes out and  
40 so those are very, very important questions.

41  
42 The problem is sometimes while we deliberate the answer we  
43 arrive at changes the format that the data we need for the  
44 assessment and the data people have already gone through  
45 preparing the data for the assessment and suddenly the rug is  
46 pulled out from under them and they have to go back to the  
47 drawing board and re-pull those data according to a new way,  
48 based on a decision that's made in real time, and it causes the

1 schedule to implode.

2  
3 What we would like to consider doing is for stocks that have  
4 never been assessed before and for questions that are  
5 overarching that may not even be an assessment but we need an  
6 answer to, what's the best way to characterize selectivity in a  
7 fishery or what's the best way to deal with difficult to  
8 parameterize features in an assessment model, like natural  
9 mortality, you would use a research track.

10  
11 The notion is you ask those questions in a system where the  
12 output isn't a completed stock assessment. The output is an  
13 answer to those questions. The deliberation is done in a way  
14 that is transparent and it's inclusive and it's excruciatingly  
15 carefully documented and then those decisions then go through  
16 peer review.

17  
18 Once those decisions are made, the stock assessment is pretty  
19 much like an update at that point. The decisions have all been  
20 made and you can go to your computer and basically implement  
21 those decisions and carry that out in a way that's very similar  
22 to an update assessment.

23  
24 We have troubleshot this ourselves and we think the idea has a  
25 great deal of promise to increasing the throughput and to ending  
26 the situation where we discover something went horribly wrong  
27 that requires a change to the data that compresses the schedule  
28 and puts us into trouble.

29  
30 Again, the process that we're proposing is to carry this, based  
31 on the approval of the Steering Committee, to carry this to the  
32 SSCs and talk about it in great length with them and  
33 troubleshot it. What could go right and what could go wrong?  
34 Then have the SSCs come back to you with some advice about  
35 whether they believe that this approach is workable or not.

36  
37 I want to congratulate and I guess thank the Steering Committee  
38 for being willing to entertain this new approach. We feel that  
39 along the way the SEDAR process has evolved a great deal over  
40 the last several years and we think that this one, instead of  
41 really being a tweak to the system, this could be the game-  
42 changer to the system and so we're looking forward to getting  
43 the SSC's input on this and getting this in front of you at a  
44 future meeting.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you for that summary, Bonnie. Any  
47 questions? No. All right. You don't need anything from the  
48 Steering Committee, right, Bonnie, and you will just go ahead

1 and that's a separate process independent from the Steering  
2 Committee or the council? You will bring it back at a future  
3 date though, correct, after the SSC has a chance to look at it?  
4

5 **DR. PONWITH:** That's correct. One of the outcomes from the  
6 Steering Committee meeting was blessings from the Steering  
7 Committee to carry this to the respective SSCs and so once that  
8 step is happened, the SSCs themselves will come to the Gulf  
9 Council asking -- Basically providing you with their advice on  
10 the utility of this idea and then, at that point, we will ask  
11 the council for their view on this.  
12

13 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** All right. Thank you. That will take us to  
14 Item Number V, SEDAR Schedule Review, Tab I, Number 4. Ryan,  
15 are you ready to go over that?  
16

#### 17 **SEDAR SCHEDULE REVIEW**

18  
19 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Yes, Mr. Chair. 2015 is underway and so  
20 obviously we wouldn't have any changes there. Our combined data  
21 and assessment workshop for vermilion snapper is going to be  
22 held November 17 through 19 in Miami and that will be the last  
23 in-person workshop that we have for Gulf species for the year.  
24

25 The goliath grouper benchmark is going to get started later this  
26 year and that's going to be run by the FWC and that should  
27 conclude sometime in July of next year.  
28

29 2016 is also finalized and we're going to have updates of gag  
30 and greater amberjack and we're also going to have our data-poor  
31 assessment effort, which we talked about the last time around,  
32 and so we're assessing I think nine species in that one, eight  
33 or nine species, and including red drum, which has been on the  
34 schedule for quite some time.  
35

36 That will be a benchmark-style effort and so they will use the  
37 data that are available to try to develop the best model  
38 appropriate to each species and we'll get individual reports for  
39 all of those. Also, we have an FWC assessment for black  
40 grouper, which will be a benchmark. That will start early in  
41 2016 and use data from 2014 and we should have that by the end  
42 of that year.  
43

44 2017 and 2018 are where we're in a little bit of a flux and so  
45 originally we had wanted to get our MRIP calibration updates,  
46 which are going to be determined in the beginning of 2016 and  
47 able to be implemented towards the end of -- Sorry. The  
48 beginning of 2017 and be able to be implemented towards the end

1 of 2017 and we were also requesting a standard assessment for  
2 red snapper, which we would, of course, want to include those  
3 MRIP recalibrations for the new effort survey.

4  
5 After some deliberations at the Steering Committee, what has  
6 come out of this is that we're going to take scamp and gray  
7 snapper from 2018 and we're going to move those up to 2017, to  
8 be started as a research cycle, because that's also when the  
9 South Atlantic is looking to do their scamp and gray snapper  
10 assessment and so it pairs well and combines resources, which  
11 are already limited, and it tries to get the best bang for our  
12 buck.

13  
14 Now, towards the end of 2017 is when we'll be able to actually  
15 use those MRIP recalibrations and so the red snapper standard  
16 assessment would still begin at the end of 2017 and it would  
17 conclude in early 2018 and it would be updated with the new MRIP  
18 numbers.

19  
20 The same would go for scamp and gray snapper. The research cycle  
21 part of the assessment would occur in early and mid-2017 and  
22 then we would include the updates from the MRIP effort survey at  
23 the end of that effort, so that we can produce management advice  
24 from that assessment.

25  
26 That combination there, which I know is different than what you  
27 see up there right now, is what's been proposed by the Steering  
28 Committee to happen for 2017. Now, both the scamp, gray  
29 snapper, and red snapper assessments would be completed and  
30 delivered to the council in early 2018.

31  
32 Also in 2018 we would have the -- We have an option here. We  
33 can do four update assessments to update certain species of  
34 highest concern, if you will, with the MRIP recalibration  
35 information or we can do, and, Bonnie, correct me if I state  
36 this inappropriately, but we can do the operational updates,  
37 which just update the new catch information using the MRIP  
38 recalibration for more species than that.

39  
40 It becomes a matter of what the priorities are and just sidebar  
41 conversations, or an email that we had between those of us  
42 representing the Gulf Council that were actually there at the  
43 Steering Committee meeting -- I had sent a list to Chairman  
44 Anson that just, based on the discussions that you guys  
45 typically have, prioritized the species which we manage that we  
46 already have assessments for, to try to determine, in order of  
47 priority, which ones were the most important to address first.



1 We can put that on the screen and it's your pleasure, Mr. Chair.  
2 I will send it to Bernie real quick, but the Science Center had  
3 asked us to prioritize these so they knew what to do first and  
4 to move down the list from there, to make sure that the biggest  
5 hot-button topics for us, the species that are under rebuilding  
6 plans primarily and those species for which we have certain  
7 specific concerns, are addressed first and then we move down the  
8 list from there to species which we have assessed before, but  
9 are not in any sort of trouble.

10  
11 Really, it's up to the council to determine what's more  
12 important to them. Do they want updates for some of these  
13 species that we know we have under our microscope, like gray  
14 triggerfish, greater amberjack, gag grouper, et cetera, or do we  
15 want these catch-only updates, which will include the updated  
16 MRIP effort calibrations for as many species as we can squeeze  
17 out of the Center to do at the end of 2018? I will send that  
18 list to Bernie real quick and she can put it up.

19  
20 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Dr. Dana, you had a question?

21  
22 **DR. PAMELA DANA:** Yes and it was a question of Ryan. Ryan, on  
23 the Spanish mackerel and cobia, I know we just had an update --  
24 Well, not an update, but we had some findings last year, but it  
25 was based on 2012 data, correct?

26  
27 **MR. RINDONE:** That's correct and those assessments were  
28 delivered to the council in 2013, but they used 2012 data.

29  
30 **DR. DANA:** In conversations that you and I have had, what is  
31 your thinking on doing either an update or a renewed assessment  
32 going forward in what timeframe for the Spanish mackerel and  
33 cobia?

34  
35 **MR. RINDONE:** If you guys are interested in updating those  
36 species, probably the earliest you could squeeze them onto the  
37 schedule would be say 2019 and, at that point, you would  
38 probably be using data from either 2017 or 2018, depending on  
39 when you updated them, but, again, I mean the assessment at that  
40 point would be roughly six years old and so if we want to try to  
41 maintain some regularity with which we update the species that  
42 we've assessed before, that certainly would be something you  
43 guys might want to consider.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Dr. Ponwith.

46  
47 **DR. PONWITH:** My recollection of the conversation is the  
48 conversation was highly convoluted, because we were looking at

1 gray snapper and scamp as benchmarks and then having them happen  
2 in both the Gulf and the South Atlantic on the same cycle and  
3 the Gulf and the South Atlantic had them in different years on  
4 the proposed schedule and, added to that complexity, was the  
5 notion of whether we go with this research track or not.

6  
7 Again, the Science Center's view is the research track is a  
8 very, very attractive approach to helping us resolve some of  
9 these long-standing issues. If we decide to employ the research  
10 track, provided the SSCs think this is a good idea and we  
11 actually get some of the detailed conversations done that are --  
12 You know the devil-is-in-the-details type of conversations done  
13 and the councils are comfortable with this, the notion was  
14 proposed that we put gray snapper and scamp as the first  
15 research track assessment and there is something attractive  
16 about that, because it matters to both councils.

17  
18 The notion is these research tracks would be done across both  
19 council jurisdictions and so we're making decisions that are  
20 uniform across the jurisdictions, unless there is a rationale  
21 for them not to be.

22  
23 So there is a lot to be gained by having them be sort of the  
24 test case for this. The catch is that I don't see it being -- I  
25 see it being very challenging to do that research track  
26 evaluation and to set up how we would assess those two stocks  
27 and then immediately early the next year, a month or two away,  
28 actually getting a stock assessment done.

29  
30 You still have to do that stock assessment and so I think that  
31 the deadlines that Ryan or the dates that Ryan put forward as  
32 the likely day you would be getting management advice from an  
33 assessment are pretty ambitious for those and I would just want  
34 to put a placeholder down as a caution for that and then put  
35 that in a parking lot.

36  
37 Now, the notion of these updates relative to MRIP, what our  
38 intent was, and this is based on advice from an across regional  
39 steering committee, who are a combination of stock assessment  
40 experts and MRIP experts, was to do update stock assessments  
41 that updated just the landings data in the most recent stock  
42 assessment update and so you wouldn't be carrying forward any of  
43 the indices, the fishery-independent indices, and you wouldn't  
44 be updating -- You would basically take the stock assessment as  
45 it was last done and put the modified recreational data into  
46 that and then rerun it, to be able to show for all of the  
47 stocks, particularly the stocks that have a strong recreational  
48 component, you could actually see what the influence of that

1 calibration was on those landings.

2  
3 The reason for doing that is to look at the management  
4 implications of that and to be able to get your ACL and your  
5 landings information in the same units. It's important to be  
6 able to look at if there are allocation implications and to be  
7 able to look at that.

8  
9 What you get if you use that approach is you can do many, many  
10 species, because it's fast and it's fairly straightforward. If  
11 you choose instead, which is what I think Ryan was proposing, to  
12 say no, we don't want those and if we're going to do an update,  
13 we want to do a real update, then the traditional update, as we  
14 do them now, where you update and use through the terminal  
15 year's landings and then you update all of the indices of  
16 abundance and the biological information, basically run the  
17 model exactly the way it was last time, but refresh on all of  
18 those inputs, that is a laborious process.

19  
20 That would take a while to be able to work your way through that  
21 list of stocks, which could be fine, but what it does then is it  
22 takes the stocks that can't be done in the first year and  
23 postpones them until the second year and you could find yourself  
24 in a situation where that MRIP calibration had a highly  
25 influential impact on that update assessment and was sort of  
26 left undetected, because you did these updates sequentially over  
27 multiple years, at least two, and probably more.

28  
29 Those are the hazards of approaching it that way and you know  
30 some of the hazards have management implications and so I just  
31 wanted to bring that to your attention.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Johnny.

34  
35 **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** Okay. My head is swimming here and I  
36 apologize. I've got a killer headache right at the moment, but,  
37 Bonnie, back up and let's talk, as best you can as a scientist  
38 to a boat captain with a headache at this particular point, MRIP  
39 calibration priority species in order, and gray triggerfish is  
40 number four. The last assessment wasn't fit for management use  
41 and how can you do any type of recalibration based on that or am  
42 I confusing two different things?

43  
44 **DR. PONWITH:** Ryan, this list, the source of this list, was?

45  
46 **MR. RINDONE:** An email exchange between myself, Mr. Gregory, and  
47 Mr. Anson, just as far as putting something on a piece of paper  
48 for purposes of discussion. It's not anything that's been

1 finalized by anybody or approved by the council at large and  
2 it's just for discussion.

3  
4 **DR. PONWITH:** That was the correct answer. I didn't want to  
5 hear that I sent that to you, because I was like, that's not  
6 looking familiar to me. Your question is how can we do one of  
7 these modified updates if the last assessment was not accepted  
8 and we would have to put that down as a special consideration  
9 stock in the way that that was handled.

10  
11 **MR. GREENE:** So when we're looking at the scheduling here for  
12 upcoming years, when you have a stock -- I know amberjack has  
13 been deemed not fit for management use in the past, although I  
14 don't think it is currently, and I know triggerfish is now and I  
15 think that those type of fish may require a little more current  
16 assessments, but where I'm struggling with is if the assessment  
17 was that bad, like for triggerfish, for example, and the numbers  
18 were all over the place, what is going to change to help get us  
19 out of this conundrum?

20  
21 You know we're trying to do the management thing here and we're  
22 really struggling with it and I want to see the gray triggerfish  
23 put on here some time in 2017 or 2018. I don't really want to  
24 wait until 2019 or 2020 and can you help me with that?

25  
26 **DR. PONWITH:** We are going to have a conversation about gray  
27 triggerfish and so what I want to do is kind of separate the  
28 issues here of the MRIP calibration and whether we do the faster  
29 calibration or whether we do a full -- Whether we do the faster  
30 update, where we just plunk in the calibrated data, or whether  
31 we do a full update assessment, but we are going to talk about  
32 the gray triggerfish assessment at greater length and so I think  
33 what I want to do is put that in a parking lot for right now,  
34 because I think this decision would benefit from completing that  
35 discussion first and it's probably too late in the day to try  
36 and do the abbreviated version of that conversation yet.

37  
38 The most important thing that I think the council can do right  
39 now is what I think you're saying is on the sheet and that is,  
40 regardless of what type of update assessment we do to account  
41 for this change in the MRIP process, it's going to be important  
42 that we exercise priorities.

43  
44 What I think is important is to know, of the stocks we have,  
45 which ones are the most important because the recreational  
46 fishing component of the landings is significant and so that  
47 would be one reason to have it high on the list, it's an  
48 important recreational species.

1  
2 Then the other factors I think that Ryan brought up are good  
3 ones and that is if it's in rebuilding, and it's important to  
4 know where you are in that process, that would be a second-tier  
5 way to put it on the priority.  
6

7 I think the decision that we're looking for now is do we get all  
8 of these done, unless they're special case, and we still need to  
9 talk about them, but do we get them all done in one year by  
10 doing this specialized approach and get some information into  
11 the hands of the managers as quickly as possible or do we work  
12 sequentially through what is a pretty substantial list, you know  
13 a few at a time over several years?  
14

15 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Mara, you had your hand up earlier?  
16

17 **MS. MARA LEVY:** I was just going to suggest that we defer on the  
18 gray triggerfish discussion and Bonnie covered that but, we will  
19 talk more about that tomorrow, I think.  
20

21 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Dr. Crabtree.  
22

23 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** Just looking at the priority species up  
24 there, it sure seems to me that yellowedge grouper and tilefish  
25 would not be priority species for MRIP calibration and I am kind  
26 of curious. I mean there is little or no recreational catch  
27 there, as far as I know.  
28

29 **MR. RINDONE:** If we have a SEDAR stock assessment for it or  
30 we're fixing to real soon, like gray snapper and scamp, I put it  
31 on the list and so it wasn't really based on the preponderance  
32 of recreational landings, but more how these stocks have been  
33 perceived as a priority to the council in the past and also  
34 considering their rebuilding status, if they were in fact under  
35 some rebuilding plan.  
36

37 Again, this was just a quick email bounce between me and Mr.  
38 Gregory and Mr. Anson, just for discussion purposes. It is by  
39 no means final or anything like that. It's just something for  
40 you guys to think about and so we can certainly shift and  
41 whatnot.  
42

43 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Dr. Ponwith, going back to your assessment or  
44 summary of the direction, I guess, that you're looking to the  
45 council to provide relative to doing the species with just the  
46 MRIP calibrated information in the model that was used  
47 previously or if you do a more standard update, if you will,  
48 where you incorporate the whole suite of information that would

1 be used in an update, I guess I didn't pick up on that subtlety  
2 during the webinar when I was listening in, because for the  
3 species that were recently assessed, I could potentially see  
4 some value and utility in just dropping in the MRIP calibrated  
5 recreational landings information.

6  
7 If you're talking about doing that with species that have not  
8 been assessed for three or four or five years prior, like we're  
9 talking about with cobia and Spanish mackerel, potentially, I  
10 don't know, other than the ACL issue, and if that's what you  
11 want to find out, is your ACLs and maybe your apportionment, as  
12 you mentioned, to allocation, that might be valuable to have,  
13 but, beyond that, I just don't see the utility for us to have  
14 any management value for those that, again, you're some distance  
15 from the previous assessment and you will not be updating the  
16 other indices, the fishery-independent and the commercial  
17 landings and those types of things.

18  
19 I guess if you can help kind of explain that a little bit more  
20 in detail as to what benefit the just MRIP calibrated  
21 information would provide, I would appreciate it.

22  
23 **DR. PONWITH:** Yes and I would certainly -- It represents a  
24 challenge, when the update assessment is old and that is the  
25 concern of the technical committee that was putting forward  
26 recommendations to the councils for how to make these decisions,  
27 was that if you skipped that piece, if you skipped just updating  
28 the landings themselves up to the terminal year, and waited to  
29 do regular standard stock assessments for all of these stocks,  
30 it could be several years before you made it through the list,  
31 particularly if they are intermingled with benchmark assessments  
32 for other species, which is essentially the case for the Gulf  
33 and for the South Atlantic.

34  
35 The impact of that change to the effort estimation process  
36 remains hidden until you actually do that full update, whereas  
37 if you did that update, it would show what those numbers would  
38 have looked like back when you did that update with that one  
39 change.

40  
41 I guess the importance of you knowing that is really, I think, a  
42 management question and that is, is the fishery sensitive to  
43 allocation balances due to the changes in the landings or are  
44 you going to have concerns or challenges based on landings being  
45 in different sets of units than your ACL is?

46  
47 That's the question that you have to consider in your mind about  
48 the benefits of waiting and doing this regular stock assessments

1 sequentially or getting them all done the first time once, using  
2 the less onerous approach.

3  
4 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you. Is there any recommendations from  
5 committee members that we could take toward the full council and  
6 let the full council decide on recommendations as to how the  
7 Science Center could proceed with this?

8  
9 **MR. GREENE:** Are you looking for a motion?

10  
11 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** I am looking for a motion, yes, if you want to  
12 provide a motion that we could take to full council or we could  
13 just let it go and pick it up again. Ryan.

14  
15 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Carrie had pointed out to  
16 me that I was remiss in ignoring the poor hogfish from that list  
17 and so I have added that to it, but we certainly have some time,  
18 or you guys certainly have some time, to consider what it is  
19 that you want to do.

20  
21 The Steering Committee doesn't meet again until late spring and  
22 we have the January and the March/April meeting, whenever that  
23 meeting is, before we actually get to that point and so there's  
24 time for some more discussion about what priorities are and what  
25 really needs to be addressed and some of those priorities might  
26 change as you discuss management implications for some of the  
27 things that we've learned about some species recently, like gray  
28 triggerfish, and so certainly no fire under the chair.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN ANSON:** Thank you, Fire Marshall Ryan. I appreciate  
31 that. Well, on that note, maybe, since other committee members  
32 don't have much to say or offer, I think we might let it then go  
33 on and let full council decide whether or not we should continue  
34 to wait or discuss and make a decision at a future time. That  
35 takes us to Item Number VI and there was not any other business  
36 brought up at the time we approved the agenda. Is there still  
37 no other business to take care of? Seeing none, the meeting is  
38 adjourned. Thank you.

39  
40 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m., October 5,  
41 2015.)

42  
43 - - -