

SEDAR Committee Summary
June 5, 2017
Leann Bosarge, Chair

SEDAR Steering Committee Review

Staff reviewed the proceedings from the May 5, 2017 SEDAR Steering Committee webinar. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) notified the Steering Committee that the SEDAR 48 assessment of southeastern US black grouper would not continue due to issues with species identification, and other issues which would be outlined in a later report from the FWC. The Steering Committee supported the recommendation of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) transition team to delay recalibration work until 2018, when more data will be available. The proposed “research track” assessment method has suffered a setback, largely due to scheduling and deadlines for deliverables to SEDAR cooperators. At this time, stock assessments scheduled to be research track assessments are being relabeled as benchmark assessments until the research track method is clarified. Lastly, the scamp research track project will be delayed until 2019.

SEDAR Schedule

Staff reviewed the SEDAR schedule with the Committee. Gray triggerfish is set to be assessed in the first half of 2018. Staff recommended that the Council request a terminal year of 2016 for the data going into the stock assessment, which would add three years of additional data, plus new sex-specific growth curves and an updated larval index.

Due to the shuffling of workloads at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) as a result of the delayed work on the MRIP recalibration, the Gulf Council has been left with an available assessment slot for late 2018. Staff recommended consideration of cobia or red grouper. Council members noted a considerable amount of input received from stakeholders concerned about the health of the Gulf cobia stock. Further, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) is going to assess cobia in 2018 also (as a benchmark; the Gulf assessment would be a standard). The SAFMC will also be considering removing Atlantic cobia from the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP, and turning management over to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, since >85% of Atlantic cobia landings come from state waters. However, it was noted, after the Council filled the 2018 assessment slot with Cobia that the same analyst is responsible for both gray triggerfish and cobia, which could create a staff availability issue and prevent both species from being assessed in the same year. Alternatively, fishermen have reported difficulty in finding red grouper for the last couple of years.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to assess gray triggerfish and cobia in 2018 as standard track assessments with a terminal year of 2016.

Motion carried with no opposition.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to assess red grouper as the number one priority in 2019 as a standard track assessment with a terminal year of 2018.

Motion carries with no opposition.

Staff noted that if final landings data are not available in time for an assessment, that preliminary landings data could be used until final data are available. Other shuffling of assessment priorities was discussed; however, staff encouraged the Committee to hold off on reorganizing 2019+ assessment priorities until after the October 2017 Steering Committee meeting.

The Committee ran out of time to discuss the stock assessment prioritization worksheet (Tab I, No. 5b), the NOAA Stock Assessment Improvement Plan (Tab I, No. 6a), and the Council's subsequent letter (Tab I, No. 6b).

This concludes my report.