

**Scientific and Statistical Committees**  
**Scope of Work**  
**July 19 – 20, 2023**  
**Tampa, Florida**

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**Agenda Item IV:** Selection of SSC representative for the August 14 – 17, 2023 Gulf Council Meeting, to be held in Austin, Texas

**Action:** Information

**Committee input and next steps:** Dr. Jim Nance will provide summaries to Council Committees, answer questions, and provide insight into the SSC deliberations from this SSC meeting.

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**Agenda Item V:** Review SEDAR 81: Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Spanish Mackerel Operational Assessment

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Committee input and next steps:** Dr. Lisa Ailloud (Southeast Fisheries Science Center [SEFSC]) will present the findings of the SEDAR 81 Operational Assessment of Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Spanish Mackerel. SEDAR 81 resolves several concerns from the previous model (SEDAR 28 2014), and incorporates updated recreational landings data calibrated to the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey (MRIP-FES). Dr. Ailloud will review the model's construction and development, included indices of relative abundance, base model estimations and results, diagnostics, and yield projections based on the Council's currently defined status determination criteria. The SSC should consider the information presented and make any appropriate recommendations about whether the assessment is consistent with the best scientific information available (BSIA). The SSC should also evaluate the projections and consider whether to recommend modifications to the catch limits to the Council.

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**Agenda Item VI:** Update and Discussion on MRIP Cumulative Estimate Reporting

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Committee input and next steps:** Dr. Richard Cody (NOAA Office of Science and Technology [NOAA OST]) will present information regarding the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) transition to cumulative and fishing year reporting, which is currently implemented and able to be queried on the NOAA OST website. This approach is intended to aggregate recreational landings data for all waves in a 12-month period, thereby increasing the available sample size for the 12-month time period presented. Further, MRIP will describe the

proportional standard error (PSE) for each 12-month period, and will notate whether it does or does not recommend use of those data for that species/area/year based on the PSE. Wave-specific recreational landings data may still be requested from NOAA OST, but will no longer be immediately publicly available. The SSC should consider the information presented and make any recommendations as appropriate.

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**Agenda Item VII:** Discussion: Technical Guidance for National Standard 1 Reference Points and Status Determinations

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Committee input and next steps:** Dr. Richard Methot (NOAA Fisheries Directorate) will present updated technical guidance for National Standard 1 on reference points and stock status determinations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. There has been substantial research over the last 25 years on the scientific basis for reference points and their expected performance in the management of sustainable fisheries, and substantial experience gained from 25 years of stock monitoring and stock assessment implementation. Research includes: methods regarding management strategy evaluation; evolution of integrated analysis assessment methods; development of methods to provide advice for data-limited stocks; development of additional ecosystem-based fishery management tools; and, investigation of changes in productivity due to regime shifts and climate change. Dr. Methot will summarize this research and development with regard to calculating and evaluating reference points for stock status determinations. Of note is that the science is still not settled on some topics, and spatiotemporal variability in approaches exists. Dr. Methot will describe recommended approaches where feasible to do so, and pros/cons of alternatives where definitive advice is not feasible. The SSC should consider the information presented and make any recommendations as appropriate.

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**Agenda Item VIII:** Public Comment

**Action:** Information

**Committee input and next steps:** Members of the public will be able to address the SSC directly with respect to the topics discussed during this meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

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**Agenda Item IX:** Evaluation of Interim Analysis Process, Part 2

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Committee input and next steps:** Dr. Katie Siegfried (SEFSC) and Mr. Ryan Rindone (Council staff) will present additional considerations for the interim analysis (IA) process. The presenters will provide an overview of the IA process, discuss the timing of index processing,

discuss the delivery dates and timing of the fishery-independent index processing compared to the delivery date of the IA, catch advice changes to the overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch, time limits on using IAs for catch advice, and compare health checks versus updated catch advice. For this iteration, the SEFSC will provide direct recommendations for many of these points for consideration by the SSC. The SSC should consider the information presented and make any recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

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**Agenda Item X:** Discussion: SEDAR 81 Evaluation and Projections

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Committee input and next steps:** Dr. Ailloud will present the results of any SSC requests from the first day of presentations and the resulting yield projections for SEDAR 81. The SSC should consider the information presented and make catch limit recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

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**Agenda Item XI:** Review: Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group King Mackerel Interim Analysis

**Action:** Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

**Committee input and next steps:** Dr. Katie Siegfried will present the results of the Council's requested interim analysis for the Gulf of Mexico migratory group of king mackerel. This interim analysis explores the use of two fishery-independent indices of abundance against the landings and ABC. Hook and line landings of king mackerel in the Gulf have declined substantially in the last two fishing years (2021/2022 and 2022/2023), and in some years, fishery-independent indices either were not conducted (2020) or had zero, or near-zero, observations of king mackerel. Further, the Council has heard from stakeholders during public testimony at recent Council meetings that king mackerel are not being encountered as frequently as in past years. In contrast, the commercial gillnet fleet is still landing its allocation of the commercial annual catch limit. The SSC should consider the data and analysis presented and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

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**Agenda Item XII:** Public Comment

**Action:** Information

**Committee input and next steps:** Members of the public will be able to address the SSC directly with respect to the topics discussed during this meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

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**Agenda Item XIII:** Other Business

**Action:** Discussion

**Committee Input and Next Steps:** The SSC will discuss an SEFSC request for participants to inform specific facets of the SEDAR 85 operational assessment for Gulf yellowedge grouper. Additional items may be brought up for discussion by SSC members, time permitting. If the SSC wishes to pursue action on those additional items, it can be scheduled for a future SSC meeting.