

Scientific and Statistical Committees
Scope of Work
March 8 – 10, 2022
Hybrid (Webinar & In-Person)

Agenda Item IV: Selection of SSC Representative for the April 4-7, 2022 Gulf Council meeting in Gulf Shores, Alabama

Action: Discussion

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Jim Nance (SSC Chair) will solicit a member of the SSC to represent the Committees at the Council's April 4 – 7, 2022, meeting in Gulf Shores, Alabama. It is preferred that the representative attend in-person; however, if not feasible, the representative may attend virtually.

Agenda Item V: Review: Estimating Absolute Abundance of Red Snapper off Louisiana

Action: Presentations, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Scott Raborn from LGL Ecological Research Associates (LGL) will present the study design associated with LGL's work to generate an estimate of absolute abundance of red snapper off Louisiana funded by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). The LGL team will also present their responses to peer-review and other SSC comments made during the initial review of this project at the SSC's September 2021 meeting. The LGL team will then present a revised estimate of absolute abundance for red snapper off Louisiana, including an updated variance estimate. The SSC should evaluate the information presented and make recommendations to the Council about integration of this study in the near-term and recommendations for future considerations of the data. The SSC may also consider whether to use this state-specific estimate as a proxy for the estimate for Louisiana from the Great Red Snapper Count (GRSC), which is being considered for revising catch advice later in the meeting.

Agenda Item VI: Discussion of Results of Post-stratification Analysis by SEFSC, FWC, and GRSC Team for Florida Absolute Abundance Data

Action: Presentations, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Katie Siegfried from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) will present efforts by the SEFSC, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and the GRSC team to conduct a post-stratification analysis of the estimates of red snapper absolute abundance for areas of the west Florida shelf. The spatial distribution of fish in the GRSC presently conflicts with data from both the SEAMAP fall and

summer groundfish survey and FWC video and visual surveys, specifically in the 10-40 meter (m) depth stratum in the Big Bend region. This research group demonstrates the effect of stratifying the 10-40 m depth stratum into the following depth strata: 10-25 m and 25-40 m. The SSC should evaluate the information presented and ask questions, and make any recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item VII: Review: Gulf of Mexico Red Grouper Interim Analysis: Health Check

Action: Presentation, discussion and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The SSC will review a presentation by Dr. Skyler Sagarese (SEFSC) on the 2022 Gulf red grouper interim analysis, using data through 2021. These data have been prepared to help inform the SSC about the condition of the Gulf red grouper stock, for which the catch limits were reduced following the SEDAR 61 stock assessment in response to projections about substantial episodic mortality from the 2018 red tide in the eastern Gulf. The SEFSC provides these interim analyses for Gulf red grouper annually for SSC evaluation; this interim analysis is provided as a “health check” of the stock, since the catch limits for red grouper that were modified via framework action by the Council in 2021 but have not yet been implemented. The SSC should consider the information presented, and provide any relevant feedback to the Council.

Agenda Item VIII: Review: Terms of Reference for SEDAR 64: Southeastern U.S. Yellowtail Snapper Update Assessment

Action: Discussion and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Mr. Ryan Rindone (Council Staff) will review the terms of reference for the update assessment of SEDAR 64, which found the southeastern U.S. yellowtail stock to be healthy as of 2017. SEDAR 64 incorporated recreational catch and effort data from MRIP-FES. At its December 2021 meeting, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) discussed the age of the projections, acknowledging that the proposed catch limits would likely not take effect until 2023, or when the projections were six years old. The SSCs of both Councils routinely recommend against using projections beyond five years. Considerate of this, the South Atlantic Council requested that FWC update the SEDAR 64 stock assessment with data through 2020; the Gulf Council mirrored this motion at its January 2022 meeting. The SSC should evaluate the proposed terms of reference and make any changes as appropriate.

Agenda Item IX: Review: Terms of Reference for SEDAR 85: Gulf of Mexico Yellowedge Grouper Operational Assessment

Action: Information only

Committee input and next steps: Mr. Rindone will review the terms of reference for the operational assessment of SEDAR 85, which will evaluate the stock condition of Gulf yellowedge grouper. The last stock assessment of yellowedge grouper (SEDAR 22 2011) estimated that the stock was not overfished or undergoing overfishing as of 2009. The Council manages yellowedge grouper as part of the deep-water grouper complex. The SSC should evaluate the proposed terms of reference and make any changes as appropriate.

Agenda Item XI: Review: Characterizing Fleet Behavior Using Analysis of Vessel Monitoring Service Data

Action: Presentation and discussion

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Larry Perruso will provide a presentation on applying movement analytics to the commercial Gulf reef fish fishery, using algorithms and commercial vessel monitoring service data. These aggregated data can be used to make inferences about patterns and changes in trends in commercial fishing effort for reef fish species, which can help describe changes in stock dynamics observed in other surveys. The SSC should consider the information presented and ask questions and provide feedback as appropriate.

Agenda Item XII: Discussion: National Academies of Sciences' Report on the Use of Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPP) in Mixed-use Fisheries

Action: Discussion and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The SSC received a presentation on the National Academies of Sciences' Report on *The Use of LAPPs in Mixed-Use Fisheries* at its January 2022 meeting, and expressed interest in further exploring the study's recommendations with the intent of considering how they may be advanced or operationalized. Staff will review the report's primary and secondary recommendations, which the SSC should discuss. The SSC may wish to recommend that one or more recommendations receive priority; or, the SSC may wish to comment on the feasibility of a recommendation, such as data or research needs, or parts within as appropriate.

Agenda Item XIII: Evaluation: Updated SEFSC Catch Analysis for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper using the Great Red Snapper Count

Action: Presentation, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Mr. Matt Smith and Dr. LaTree Denson (SEFSC) will present the results of the SEFSC's updated catch analyses for red snapper, based on the GRSC estimate of absolute abundance and the SSC's recommendations for parameterization. These catch analyses will be based on the results of the SSC's discussions during its January 2022 meeting. The SSC should consider differences between the analyses, evaluate their performance,

and determine which to be the most plausible estimate of red snapper absolute abundance. The SSC may also, at its discretion, consider the inclusion of the Louisiana-specific estimate of absolute abundance from the study performed by LGL Ecological Research Associates for LDWF in place of the GRSC estimate for Louisiana. If the SSC finds one of the analyses to be appropriate for revising red snapper catch advice, it may recommend updated overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch values based on that information.

Agenda Item XV: Review: An Update on the Development of Brown and White Shrimp Empirical Dynamic Models (EDM)

Action: Presentation, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Michelle Masi (SERO) and Dr. Steve Munch (Southwest Fisheries Science Center) will present an update on the development of empirical dynamic models for predicting brown and white shrimp abundance in the Gulf of Mexico, and provide input on how this project relates to the previous efforts by the various working groups for shrimp and the broader upcoming SEDAR research track assessment scheduled to start in mid-2023. The SSC should consider the information presented, ask questions, and make recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item X, XIV, XVI: 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 webinar meeting, and other matters, as time allows.

Agenda Item XVII: Other Business

Action: Discussion

Committee Input and Next Steps: Additional items may be brought up for discussion by SSC members, time permitting. If the SSC wishes to pursue action, then action can be scheduled at a future SSC meeting.