

Scientific and Statistical Committees
Scope of Work
September 21 – 23, 2022
Tampa, Florida

Agenda Item IV: Selection of SSC representative for the October 24 – 27, 2022 Gulf Council Meeting, to be held in Biloxi, MS

Action: Information Only

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

Agenda Item V: Review of Socioeconomic Aspects in Stock Assessments Workshop Report

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Drs. Andrea Chan and Alan Haynie will give a presentation on the Socioeconomic Aspects in Stock Assessments Workshop (SEASAW) report: Recommendations for Increasing Assessment Accuracy and Improving Management Advice. Drs. Chan and Haynie will discuss the overall objectives as well as the specific goals of this initiative. Drs. Chan and Haynie will also present the recommendations provided in the report. The SSC should review the information presented and offer suggestions. The SSC should also attempt to identify opportunities to use the information presented in the Gulf region, as applicable.

Agenda Item VI: Review of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Dashboard

Action: Presentation, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The Council is considering updating its current descriptions of EFH for its managed shrimp and finfish species through a Generic Amendment. Dr. Lisa Hollensead (Council Staff) will present a webtool which will allow for a visual comparison of the proposed management Alternatives and available benthic habitat spatial data layers for the Committee's review. The Committee should explore the webtool, ask questions of staff, and provide comment on the presented data layers.

Agenda Item VII: 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 VIII: Presentation: Current Approaches to Allocation Analysis

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Dr. David Carter (SEFSC) will current discuss approaches to allocation analysis. Dr. Carter will present allocation methods typically used in the Gulf and review alternative allocation methods. Dr. Carter will highlight the pros and cons of each allocation method presented. The SSC should review the material presented, discuss the allocation methods presented, suggest revisions and make recommendations, as needed.

Agenda Item IX: Review: SEDAR 68 Operational Assessment for Gulf of Mexico Scamp

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Dr. Katie Siegfried (SEFSC) will present the findings of the SEDAR 68 Operational Assessment of Gulf of Mexico Scamp. SEDAR 68 began in 2020 with a research track to build the modeling environment for this stock assessment, as it is a first for scamp in the Gulf. Dr. Siegfried 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. Scamp is currently considered part of the shallow-water grouper complex (along with black grouper, yellowfin grouper, and yellowmouth grouper). Also, commercial harvest of scamp is regulated under an individual fishing quota (IFQ) program such that when a shareholder of commercial shallow-water grouper allocation has landed that allocation for the year, they can still land scamp on any remaining deep-water grouper allocation. 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 consider whether it is more appropriate to examine a separate catch limit for scamp, including whether to break scamp out from the shallow-water grouper complex, and make any commensurate recommendations to the Council.

Agenda Item X: 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 XI: Review of Scope of Work for 2025 Operational Assessment of Lane Snapper

Action: Discussion and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Mr. Ryan Rindone (Council Staff) will review the scope of work for the planned operational assessment of Gulf lane snapper with the SSC. This operational assessment is tentatively scheduled to occur in 2025, using data through 2023. The last catch analysis of lane snapper was performed as an interim analysis in 2019, which used catch-per-unit-effort data from the headboat fleet through 2018, and found the stock to be healthy. The SSC should evaluate the proposed scope of work and provide recommendations as appropriate. The SSC should also consider whether the scope of work recommended for this assessment would benefit from topical working groups to address any key issues. This scope of work will then be sent to SEDAR for consideration in the development of the terms of reference for the same assessment. Alternatively, the SSC may also recommend another interim analysis be conducted for lane snapper, if the SSC thinks that an operational assessment is not presently necessary to monitor the health of the stock.

Agenda Item XII: Review of Scope of Work for 2025 Operational Assessment of Gag Grouper

Action: Discussion and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Mr. Rindone will review the scope of work for the planned operational assessment of Gulf gag grouper with the SSC. This operational assessment is tentatively scheduled to occur in 2025, using data through 2023. The last stock assessment for gag grouper was performed as an alternative model run using the base model for SEDAR 72, and swapped the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) recreational landings and discards data for the private angling and state for-hire fleets for the same from the state of Florida's State Reef Fish Survey (SRFS). This SRFS run was considered consistent with BSIA by the SSC in July 2022, and estimated gag grouper to be overfished and experiencing overfishing as of 2019. A rebuilding plan to end overfishing of gag grouper (Reef Fish Amendment 56) is being developed by the Council. The SSC should evaluate the proposed scope of work and provide recommendations as appropriate. The SSC should also consider whether the scope of work recommended for this assessment would benefit from topical working groups to address any key issues. This scope of work will then be sent to SEDAR for consideration in the development of the terms of reference for the same assessment.

Agenda Item XIII: Review of Scope of Work for 2025 Operational Assessment of Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group of King Mackerel

Action: Discussion and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Mr. Rindone will review the scope of work for the planned operational assessment of the Gulf migratory group of king mackerel (Gulf king mackerel) with the SSC. This operational assessment is tentatively scheduled to occur in 2025, using data through 2023. The last stock assessment for Gulf king mackerel was SEDAR 38 Update, which updated recreational landings and discards data with those calibrated to MRIP's Fishing Effort Survey. SEDAR 38 Update also revised the estimate of shrimp bycatch, and all data in the model were updated through the 2017 – 2018 fishing year. The SSC reviewed SEDAR 38 Update in 2020, considered it to be consistent with BSIA, and estimated that the stock was not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. However, the SSC noted depressed recruitment in the stock for approximately 13 years compared to the long-term average from the data-rich period for the species (1986-present). Further, the 2021/2022 fishing season marks the first time on over 20 years that the commercial sector has not landed its quota. The SSC should evaluate the proposed scope of work and provide recommendations as appropriate. The SSC should also consider whether the scope of work recommended for this assessment would benefit from topical working groups to address any key issues. This scope of work will then be sent to SEDAR for consideration in the development of the terms of reference for the same assessment.

Agenda Item XIV: Review of Updated Projections for Gulf of Mexico Gag Grouper using SRFS

Action: Presentation, discussion, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Drs. Lisa Ailloud and Katie Siegfried (SEFSC) will review updated catch projections for gag grouper based on the alternative SRFS run considered to be BSIA by the SSC in July 2022. These updated projections consider a revised sector allocation of 65% recreational, 35% commercial, based on the application of the SRFS landings and discards to the historical reference period (1986 – 2005) used to set the current sector allocation for gag grouper (presently equal to 61% recreational, 39% commercial). As part of its work to develop a rebuilding plan for gag grouper (Reef Fish Amendment 56), the Council considered other reference periods (1986 – 2009 [pre-IFQ] and 1986 – 2019 [data-rich period]), and found those referenced periods to result in similar average landings ratios between the commercial and recreational fleets. The SEFSC will provide projections based on four scenarios: the minimum time to rebuild (T_{Min}) with fishing mortality set equal to zero ($F = 0$; 12 years); 75% of F at 40% spawning potential ratio (SPR: the current proxy for maximum sustainable yield; 19 years); T_{Min} plus one generation period (8 years for gag grouper; 20 years total), and $T_{Min} * 2$ (24 years). The SSC should ask questions as appropriate, and evaluate the projections under the revised sector allocation scenario and rebuilding timelines to determine whether they are consistent with BSIA and suitable to inform management advice.

Agenda Item XV: 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 XVI: 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.