

Scientific and Statistical Committees
Scope of Work
May 3-5, 2021
Webinar

Agenda Item IV: Selection of SSC representative for the June 21-25, 2021 Gulf Council Meeting, to be held hybrid (virtual and face-to-face) and in Key West, FL

Action: Select SSC representative

Committee input and next steps: The SSC will select a member to participate in the June 2021 Council meeting. The representative will provide a summary to Council Committees, answer questions and provide insight into the SSC deliberations from this SSC webinar meeting. The SSC representative will have the option of attending the meeting in-person in Key West, or participating via webinar.

Agenda Item V: Management Considerations for Using Interim ABC Analyses

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will provide an overview presentation regarding the potential management considerations and uses of the interim ABC analysis tool provided by the SEFSC. Red grouper is used as an example for management considerations and appropriate uses of interim ABC analysis. The presentation will provide an overview on where the Council currently is in the development of Reef Fish Amendment 53¹: Red Grouper Allocations and Catch Limits, and will provide current landings and catch limits for red grouper. The SSC should provide feedback on staff's approach for the proposed management considerations and recommend improvements for using interim analysis tools in the future.

Agenda Item VI: Review of Gulf Red Grouper Updated Indices of Abundance

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The SSC will review a presentation by Dr. Skyler Sagarese from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) on the 2020 Gulf red grouper interim analysis and updated indices of abundance. 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. The SSC should consider the information

¹ https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/B-9d-Draft-RF-AM-53-Red-Grouper_4-6-2021-April-Council.pdf

presented, and provide any relevant feedback for management consideration and uses of interim analysis in the future for red grouper.

Agenda Item VII: Review of Gulf Penaeid Shrimp Working Groups

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The SSC will be presented with an update on the NMFS Shrimp Working Groups. These working groups are tasked with evaluating various shrimp data processing and estimation methods (life history and environmental data; fishing effort estimation; SEAMAP trawl indices of abundance; catch data and estimation; bycatch estimation). The SSC should consider the presentation and ask questions. This information does not require any formal SSC action.

Agenda Item VIII: Review of Gulf Royal Red Shrimp Index

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The SSC will be presented with the 2019 Royal Red shrimp index, relating landings to the ACL. The SSC should consider the presentation and ask questions. This information does not require any formal SSC action.

Agenda Item IX: SEDAR 74: Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Research Track Participant Solicitation

Action: Solicitation of volunteers

Committee input and next steps: Mr. Rindone will solicit the SSC for participants in the SEDAR 74 research track assessment of Gulf of Mexico red snapper. The Data Workshop will be held November 1-5, 2021; the assessment webinars will be held between May and August 2022; and, the Review Workshop will tentatively be held in January 2023. The Council is responsible for appointing individuals to participate in all components of the project, and at this time is requesting SSC volunteers for the Data Workshop panel. The Council is also soliciting appointments for the Assessment Development Team (ADT). ADT members will participate in all stages of SEDAR 74. These participants will serve as the core decision-making body for this assessment. SSC members who think they are appropriate for a role may volunteer for it. The Council will make the final decision about the participants to appoint by the end of May 2021.

Agenda Item X: Joint Grouper-Tilefish and Red Snapper IFQ Review

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council and NMFS staff will give a presentation on the review of the grouper-tilefish and red snapper individual fishing quota (IFQ) programs, the two IFQ programs established in the Gulf of Mexico. For this review, the two programs are evaluated jointly. The review follows NMFS' guidance on the review of catch share programs. The SSC will discuss and review the information presented, provide feedback as warranted, and provide recommendations.

Agenda Item XI: Allocation Review Guidelines

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Council staff will present an update on the development of guidelines for the review of allocations in the Gulf. The update will include a discussion on tiered allocation reviews. The SSC will discuss the information provided and make suggestions as needed.

Agenda Item XII: Review of ABC Control Rule: Tier 1

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: The SSC will review presentations by the SEFSC on an alternative approach to the current Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule, used by the SSC for determining the scientific uncertainty between the overfishing limit (OFL) and the ABC. The current ABC Control Rule has been in place since 2011; however, SSC members have regularly expressed a desire to revisit the control rule. This stems from the propensity for the buffer determined by the P* approach generally resulting in a difference between the OFL and ABC that is not representative of the uncertainty identified in the stock assessment. The SSC will review these presentations and the background materials provided, and should focus its efforts on how to revise Tier 1 of the ABC Control Rule. The SSC should make revisions and recommendations as appropriate.

Agenda Item XIII: NMFS Policy Document: Determination of BSIA in the Southeast Region

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: This item will not be ready for presentation at the May 2021 SSC meeting.

Agenda Item XIV: Gulf Gray Triggerfish Age Validation Challenges and Recommendations

Action: Presentations, discussions, and recommendations

Committee input and next steps: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were unspent Council travel funds in 2020. The last assessment for gray triggerfish (SEDAR 62) was aborted because of irreconcilable data issues, and a research track was recommended by the SEFSC in January 2020. The Council is considering funding an age validation study for Gulf gray triggerfish. Council staff will provide an overview presentation and draft request for proposals (RFP) for the SSC's consideration. This presentation will outline data gaps and uncertainties in aging gray triggerfish, provide an overview of the draft RFP, and the proposed review process and timeline. Background literature is included to inform the discussion and recommendations by the SSC on this topic.

The Council's intent for this study, if funded, would be to have it completed and available in time for the scheduled research track of gray triggerfish beginning in 2023. The SSC should comment on whether this is the best approach to inform these data gaps for the scheduled research track, and if the funding and draft call for proposals would cover the relevant data gaps to better inform the next gray triggerfish stock assessment. The SSC should also provide other relevant scientific feedback and approaches for research and management consideration.

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: Mr. Rindone will solicit the SSC for two participants in the SEDAR 68 Review Workshop for Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Scamp: one reviewer and one workshop chair. The Review Workshop is scheduled for August 31 – September 3, 2021, and will be conducted via webinar.

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.