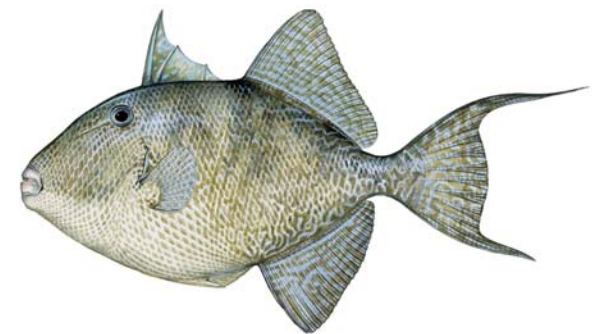




# Logistics and Estimated Costs of Independent Gray Triggerfish Stock Assessment



# Council Motion – October 2020

**Motion: To request staff provide guidance on using 2020 budget funds for the intention of red drum independent offshore purse seine data and an independent stock assessment on gray triggerfish.**



# Overview

- Assessment and Management Status
- Logistics and Considerations
- Estimated Costs of Stock Assessment
- Existing Data Stream Considerations
- Next Steps



# Assessment and Management Status

- Last approved stock assessment terminal year 2015
- SEDAR 62 was aborted because of irreconcilable data issues; Research Track recommended
- Gray Triggerfish not overfished or undergoing overfishing; however, stock is in rebuilding plan
- Interim analysis was conducted and Council is to take final action to increase catch levels at this meeting



# Logistics and Considerations

- Hiring an independent contractor will only reduce Science Center workload for an assessment by 30-40% (Adjustments to SEDAR schedule likely)
- Data providers would still need complete updated indices, landings, discards and biological information (60-70% of Science Center workload for an assessment)
- Existing data streams may not result in more informed management advice; still several outstanding research questions



# Estimated Costs of Stock Assessment

## Contracted Analyst Responsibilities:

- Conducting all analyses in one year
  - Present findings at several webinars/meetings;
  - Prepare a report;
  - Following peer review - update and document analyses
- Estimated cost is \$175,000-\$205,000
    - CIE review costs added at \$30,000 (outside SEDAR)
    - Travel costs of meetings not included
  - Estimate based on Standard Stock Assessment contracted for Sandbar Sharks
  - Personal communication John Walter 2021



# Existing Data Stream Considerations – Gray Triggerfish

- Gulf-wide sex-specific age and growth studies
- Suggestion that bomb radiocarbon dating improved methodology for ageing hard parts
- New study indicates discard mortality is higher than previously documented
- Unique life history – makes use of current sampling methodologies difficult for this species
  - Large unknowns/limitations in the western Gulf
  - May be due to substrate preference for hard bottom
  - Long pelagic stage with close association to *Sargassum* before recruiting to benthic reef-associated habitat
  - Change in movement and distribution shift of *Sargassum*



## Next Steps

- Does the Council want to move forward with funding a stock assessment for gray triggerfish?
- Would the Council consider funding a single research need over the 5-year grant award cycle first?
- Need to consider budget and determine how much funding and number of years
- Consider cost-benefit analysis and management implications of project results





# Questions?

