GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE

Key West Marriott Beachside Hotel  
Key West, Florida  
June 18, 2018

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The Gulf SEDAR Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the Key West Marriott Beachside Hotel, Key West, Florida, Monday morning, June 18, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman Leann Bosarge.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

CHAIRMAN LEANN BOSARGE: I will call to order the Gulf SEDAR Committee. The members of this committee are myself, Mr. Dale Diaz, Dr. Tom Frazer, and Captain Johnny Greene. The agenda can be found under Tab I, Number 1. Were there any changes or modifications to the agenda as presented? Seeing none, we will approve the agenda. The agenda is approved.

The minutes from our last meeting in October of 2017 can be found under Tab I, Number 2. Does Ms. Mary want to make an amendment to those? We need to change “Mary” to “Mara”. Other than that, are there any changes that need to be made to those minutes? Seeing none, the minutes stand approved with that change. Our Action Guide and Next Steps is located under Tab I, Number 3. At this point, I will turn it over to Mr. Gregory to take us through it.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’ve got two items here, and it’s the Draft Steering Committee Report and the Updated SEDAR Schedule Review. There is probably more information in the council input and next steps than we need, because I’m going through that with a PowerPoint presentation, but a lot of discussion was had at this year’s meeting, and there is some potential changes that I wanted to bring to the council’s attention.

In the Steering Committee report, please review the proposed changes to the SEDAR process. The research, operational, and interim assessment process will begin replacing the current benchmark, standard, and update process this year, starting with the scamp research track assessment.

In the next paragraph, it reads that the council may want to inquire with the Center regarding changes in specifying assessment availability by data processing weeks rather than the four slots a year that we have been allocated in the past and the proposal to build in a reserve capacity of unallocated weeks each year to accommodate potential unforeseen demands, and, this was a mistake, but the need for an interim assessment on red snapper. I just wanted to bring to your attention that we have
requested an interim assessment on red grouper.

That is being somewhat delayed, because the Center wants to do a management strategy evaluation, which I don’t think is a normal part of interim assessments, and what I think we’ll request is suggest that the council request that the Center provide, in a presentation at a future meeting, more detail about what the research track, operational, and interim assessment process is going to be.

Now, we’ve discussed the research track for a couple of years now, and so it’s not a new term for us, but we’re getting more details, and we’re getting to the point where we’re going to make that transition.

The second item we want to present to you is the SEDAR schedule. The 2019 schedule is set. King mackerel will be an update assessment, because a joint assessment with Mexico is not possible. The vermilion snapper is scheduled as a standard assessment, and the cobia is an update assessment. Florida FWC plans to conduct a yellowtail snapper assessment this year also, in 2019.

The MRIP calibrations due in 2018 may expand into 2019, and, by the August council meeting, the SSC and the council need to confirm that a red snapper research track assessment is desired for 2020, followed by an operational assessment in 2021. If we go that route -- What I said at the Steering Committee was the council, sometimes being impatient, will probably ask for an interim red snapper assessment in the middle of that, and that’s why it got put in the report above.

SEDAR MAY 2018 DRAFT STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

Now, you’ve got the draft committee report, and what I want to do now is give a presentation on that, a short presentation, if we can get that on the screen and have it move forward. Note in the committee report itself that there is sections -- There is a summary of the meeting discussion, and then there is the meeting outcomes, and the meeting outcomes is really what was decided, and sometimes the information in the meeting outcomes is contrary to the information prior to that, because of decisions that were made in the Steering Committee.

These are the attachments that came with our Steering Committee agenda, and these attachments and all the agendas and information can be found on the SEDAR website, and that’s called sedarweb.org.
Again, there is this research, operational, and interim assessments. The research and operational assessments are going to be SEDAR activities that will be negotiated through the Steering Committee process. The interim assessments, which are to be more frequent, much more frequent, are going to be negotiations between the Science Center and the council itself.

Now, the operational assessments, which are to be the assessments, other than the research track, the assessments that give us management advice, and recall that the research track assessment is similar to the benchmark, but it’s going to be conducted with whatever data is available and not necessarily the most up-to-date data, and so it’s not designed to give us management advice. Those research tracks will be followed by an operational assessment.

Those operational assessments can be either similar to our current update or our standard process, and the Center is asking that our SSC determine, for each operational assessment, which type of operational assessment we want, either an update or a standard, and so that clearly comes back to the council for that decision.

As it says in the next line, clear and detailed terms of reference are required by February of each year, and so what I am suggesting is that this council have a SEDAR Committee meeting at each meeting for the rest of this year to work through these schedules and to get everything in line, so we don’t fall behind, and it may necessitate — it definitely will necessitate more frequent committee meetings going into the future.

Now, in red, I’ve got that the council should build in a reserve capacity in the SEDAR schedule, and this is a request from the Science Center to address emergencies or unforeseen concerns, and that’s an important thing to discuss, because the council has historically felt like we didn’t have enough opportunities to do assessments, and I don’t know how much this would slow down that assessment process or the frequency of assessments.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Can you back up to that last slide? I am just going to recap something, to make sure that everybody was paying full attention. When we get into that SEDAR schedule, we’re going to start talking about things as research track assessments or operational track, and so let’s -- I just want to make sure that everybody can translate from the old verbiage that we used to use to the new verbiage, and so a benchmark --
We used to ask for a benchmark, and that’s now a research track. We used to ask for updates and standards, which are somewhere below a benchmark, and not as in-depth as a benchmark, and those are now operational assessments.

Both of those fall into the operational assessment category, and the SSC and the councils will recommend to the Science Center which way we want to go and whether we want it to be an update or a standard, but we’re going to have to do a little work with our terms of reference and justify why it should be one or the other, if we want the bigger of the two.

These interim analyses are kind of different, and this is new. This is something that we’re going to start getting, and red grouper will probably be our first one, and that’s where -- Because we do have a decent gap, a lot of times, between stock assessments on a particular species, we can get interim analyses that may be whatever data stream we have the most confidence in for that particular species, and it may be a CPUE index, or it may be landings, or it may be a multitude of things, a combination of things, but they can bring that to the SSC, and we can take a look at that and say, all right, do we need to make some changes upward or downward in between stock assessments with that particular species, and so I’m just recapping what Doug said, to make sure we’re ready for this new terminology when we get into the next agenda item.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Thank you. The SEDAR projects that are ongoing, you heard earlier today that we have a stock ID process for cobia, and there was some discussion as to how involved this has been and how time consuming it’s been, particularly in light that it’s not a controversial one. There are no disagreements over the science, like there was in blueline tilefish.

Scamp will be our first research track assessment, and that will be assigned to slots, or data weeks, for both councils. King mackerel was supposed to be a benchmark assessment jointly with Mexico, but Mexico is not able to provide the data or to cooperate, and so king mackerel was then considered to be a standard assessment, and it now has been decided to be an update assessment in 2019.

Again, a little bit more detail on updates versus standards, and clearly a standard requires more effort, and both will be replaced by the operational assessment. The MRIP revision assessments will be completed once the revised data are available. There has been another delay in getting that data,
and I will talk a little bit about that I think in the next slide, but the council will negotiate directly with the Southeast Science Center to determine delivery schedules and presentations. They are expected to be available, at this time, for SSC review in October of next year.

Here is a table showing the slippage of the MRIP data and the effect it’s having on our projected or planned stock assessments for Gulf red grouper and Gulf gray triggerfish. It’s basically about a three-and-a-half-month delay in the data being available, and we assume the estimated completion dates are also about a three-and-a-half-month delay from what we heard the last time we reviewed the schedule.

How this is going to bump our plans for 2019 and 2020 is hard to say. That’s been our problem for the last two or three years, is that the MRIP analyses have been bumping our assessments, and they have been delayed at least twice, and this may be the third delay.

The assessment schedule review, this was new information from the Science Center that, instead of looking at four slots of assessments, and you might recall that last year we ran into difficulty, and we really didn’t discuss it at this meeting, of the same assessment person doing two different assessments and not being able to do two back-to-back, because of that one person. We didn’t really discuss that and the need for, I guess, cross-training within the Center, but, right now, we’re being told that the Center is capable of processing data for thirty-four weeks out of the year, and that is for all three councils, the Caribbean, the South Atlantic, and the Gulf of Mexico.

A benchmark assessment requires six weeks. A research track and a standard assessment requires five weeks. An update assessment typically requires three weeks, and so an operational assessment will be between three and five weeks, depending on whether it’s going to be a standard-like assessment or an update-like assessment.

Now, note that red snapper has always been considered, since I have been here, as a double assessment, and so, if we’re asking for a research track assessment for red snapper in 2020, according to the information provided to us, that is going to require ten weeks of data processing, which is a third of the entire availability of resources for doing assessments in that year.
Therefore, the Center has informed us, after the Steering Committee meeting, that the 2020 preliminary assessment plan requires fifty-nine weeks of data processing, substantially more than they have the resources to do, and so we must adjust our requests, the three councils, by the spring of 2019 meeting, and therein is why I think you’re going to need meetings of the SEDAR Committee each time that the council meets for the rest of this year and going up into the spring meeting.

A reminder that the operational assessments need scope of work and terms of reference developed three months prior to the spring meeting. Now, the Southeast Center is automating their data processing, and they are hiring new staff, and so their capabilities, i.e., that limit of thirty-four weeks, will change or increase as time goes on, if they’re successful in improving their resources.

That is all of the presentation for the SEDAR Steering Committee, and there was a lot of changes, something for us all to digest, and I know the Center is in transition as well, and, Clay, I welcome any comments that you might want to make on any of this.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Porch.

DR. CLAY PORCH: Thank you, Chair. For the most part, I agree with what Doug has presented. We are in transition, and we’re trying to reposition people and hire some new people to process the data. As many of you know, the data processing challenges in the Southeast are much greater than any other region, because we have eight states to deal with and lots of academic partners, and trying to stitch all these pieces of data together is quite challenging, even with the Atlantic States and Gulf States being active partners, and so that’s part of the problem there.

We need to hire a few more people to help us process the data, and we have also already contracted people to try and automate the data processing, to the extent possible, so that we essentially have a one-stop shop in the cloud, where not only our assessment folks could download the data at their convenience, but the public can generally access the data. That is in the works, and that will probably take a couple of years to come to full fruition.

Doug mentioned the research track, and I think you indicated five weeks for data processing time, and then he suggested that it might take ten weeks for red snapper, and, generally, when we’re talking about a benchmark assessment, yes, it takes twice
as long for red snapper as any other species, one because we have the east and west assessments, and so we’re essentially doing two assessments, plus the sheer number of datasets that are being processed for red snapper, and it’s arguably the most complicated assessment in the country, and so it does take a long time to do that.

For a research track, I don’t think it’s going to be quite double, and so we probably need to refine those numbers a little bit. I don’t think it’s ten weeks of data processing time for a research track for red snapper, and so maybe we need to go back and kind of iterate that a little bit more.

You mentioned the interim red grouper assessment, or analysis, and just interim analyses in general. The reason why we wanted to do an MSE, management strategy evaluation, is to refine how much you might increase catch with an increase in an index or decrease catch with a decrease in an index.

The concept would be, for instance, if we had a fishery-independent survey and it covered basically the fishable size classes for any species, and pick red grouper, if the index is going up, arguably you should be able to increase catch a little bit.

If the index is going down, you should decrease, but exactly how much you increase catch or decrease catch with the index is the question, because there is always some observation error in an index. In other words, the index isn’t a perfect measure of the trends in the stock, and there is some observation error, or maybe the index doesn’t cover the entire range, and so the trends in the stock can be a little bit different from the trends in the index, and so you want to buffer how much you increase or decrease catch in response to the index, and so that’s the idea of wanting to do a management strategy evaluation, but I think we can knock out some preliminary evaluations in just a few months.

The operational assessments, in this case, as Doug said, they can be anywhere on a continuum between updates, where you’re just adding years of data and changing nothing else, to what we’re calling a standard assessment, and the idea would be the SSC and others would contribute to craft the terms of reference, and presumably the SSC would only add to the terms of reference things that they feel comfortable reviewing.

In other words, if it was something that they felt was outside their expertise, that might need the additional independent peer
review, and that should probably go to a research track, but, if it was just adding a new index of abundance, the SSC might be comfortable reviewing that, and so you would just add that to the terms of reference for the operational assessment.

Of course, the more complicated you make that, the more things you add to the terms of reference, it starts getting towards a standard, and it takes more data processing time, and so we would have to adjust that schedule to account for the fact that you have more data processing time. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Just a couple of observations. I want to say the thirty-four weeks of data processing and actually -- We utilized that when we went to the SEDAR Steering Committee meeting, and that’s the first time that really we’ve tried to plug in the different types of assessments and get that schedule honed-in on using that type of strategy, where you understand what your bottleneck is, and you’re always going to have a bottleneck at some point in the process, no matter what the process is.

At this point, that’s our weakest link. That’s our bottleneck, but if we understand that and that is very transparent and you understand that’s what it is and you can put a number on it, thirty-four weeks, then you don’t go into a process and try and pick and choose things and think you’re going to get something and then you don’t. You know what it is, and you work towards it, and hopefully one day we can work through it, but this makes it very clear what we’re up against and what we can expect to get, and then we make better decisions as to what species and types of assessment, what level of assessment, you want to put on that schedule.

I really actually thought that, although some people may see it as a negative thing, I think it was a very positive thing at that meeting, that we understood that and we worked around it, and we worked within it.

The other thing that I wanted to say is I think this MSE that you’re talking about going through that process with red grouper, I think that will be very helpful, actually, to the SSC, because I think that was one of the kind of gray areas where they had some questions of, well, okay, yes, we can see this, but how far do we go in one direction or the other and how do we come up with that percent change that you would want to offset, and so I think that’s going to be helpful.

Then the question that will put you on the spot is when are you
going to have that ready for them? Do you think they will be able to see that at their next meeting, which would be in July, so that the council could have some feedback on it from them for our August meeting, so that we could, hopefully by October, get a document started on red grouper, because that’s kind of the whole point. We know we’re a little behind the curve on this, and the fishermen have been telling us for a couple of years now that we have a problem.

**DR. PORCH:** Yes, I think by July we could have some preliminary analyses, but not a full-blown management strategy evaluation. Those typically take some time, but we can look at what’s been done in the literature for similar situations, and maybe we can do some preliminary analyses to give us some guidance on that for the short-term, and then we will refine it over the long-term.

The only other thing I would add is, with the thirty-four weeks, that’s recognizing, as the Chair recognized, it’s accounting for the bottleneck that we have in data processing. Right now, it’s not with the assessment leads, and so, when you see all those slots that we’re giving, those aren’t the primary bottleneck anymore. It’s actually the data processing. That’s my job, to figure out how we can give you guys more weeks in the data processing, and so my goal is to make the assessment leads the limit again and handle all that data processing.

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Frazer.

**DR. TOM FRAZER:** Thank you. If we work backwards from thirty-four weeks, and earlier on in the presentation we were asking for some discretionary time to deal with kind of unforeseen things, how many weeks would you want, from the Science Center’s perspective, for discretionary issues?

**CHAIRMAN BOSARGE:** Dr. Porch.

**DR. PORCH:** I don’t think that was actually originally raised by the Science Center, but the idea is, if you want some more flexibility in the scheduling, you need to have a little bit of wiggle room in there, and when you schedule everything to the hilt and then something unforeseen happens, then, since there is no wiggle room, it’s really hard to respond to that, and something has to give.

The only thing I would add to that, probably even more important than that wiggle room, is being consistent in the scheduling, and one of the things that we have insisted on is we can’t
change the schedule less than a year out, because there is too
many inefficiencies introduced when you do that. You have your
data processors trying to get all the datasets ready, whether
it’s your ageing, reading otoliths, whether it’s processing
fisheries statistics, and then, all of a sudden, you say, no,
we’re not going to do that and shift gears and go to another
species, and I can see Dave nodding his head.

When you do that, you are always introducing inefficiencies into
the system that slow us down, and so we need to do a much better
job of consistent planning, preferably at least two years in
advance, and hopefully we get to a point, for certain key
stocks, that we actually have a fairly regular schedule, and
that will make the whole process more efficient.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Anson.

MR. KEVIN ANSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I’m not on your
committee, obviously, but I had a question, based on Dr. Porch’s
comments. Related to terms of reference and the operational and
whether or not specific questions that are added to the terms of
reference that come from the SSC, as to whether or not it would
change that from operational to a standard and then, thus,
change the time.

This is kind of a big turning wheel, and there are lots of
things going on relative to limited resources and trying to
squeeze that all in within the year, and so it’s my
understanding that there was already, in the older way of doing
things, there was a process by which terms of reference were
developed, and that was primarily developed in the SSC and not
so much input from the council.

Do you see this new change -- Will that guide a lot of the
decisions that the SSC makes relative to specific terms of
reference for specific assessments, whereas now, with this new
process and everything, that they may not include terms of
reference, only because it’s going to slow that process down
now, and do you see that changing at all from the way it was
before and whether or not moving it from operational and
standard kind of on the fly or within this working window --

If there is some new data that comes along or something comes
along that poses some interest to SSC members that might help
address or provide a better assessment, I am just wondering if
they wouldn’t ask for that one or two items, because it’s going
to now be bumped up into a standard, which is going to throw off
the timing and then everything else kind of trickles back.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Porch.

DR. PORCH: All we’re doing is replacing update and standard with operational, and then exactly what you’re going to look at in the operational assessment will be dictated by the terms of reference, and so, in that sense, it’s almost just semantics, but an operational assessment is really reflecting the continuum of what we call a strict update now up to what we’re calling a standard.

The only caveat that I would place there is sometimes some of our standards have almost risen to a benchmark assessment, and we would want to avoid that. In other words, there could be some pressure that, in order to avoid a research track, we just call it an operational and then add tons of things in the terms of reference, and so one of the jobs of the staff will be to look at what is being asked in the standard and then calculate how many weeks of data preparation time are going to go along with it.

Then that would have to figure into our scheduling, but, essentially, I don’t see it being fundamentally different from what we’re doing now, because we are still developing terms of reference for a standard, but it’s just a name change. Operational can be anything from an update to equivalent to what we call a standard.

It’s preferably more towards an update, unless there is some compelling reason to change, and, not only that, but you would want to make sure the SSC is comfortable reviewing it, because they are the only review body at that point, unless you go to a research track. Does that answer your question?

MR. ANSON: Yes.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Donaldson.

MR. DAVE DONALDSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am not on your committee, but, Clay, to your point, and I think it’s worth mentioning about streamlining the data processing, we have received some funding through FIS to kind of modernize our data management system to help along those lines, because I agree that we want to make sure that we get that process as streamlined as possible, and so we’re trying to update it so that we can provide the information in a more timely manner, and so I just wanted to mention that.
CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Along those lines, I heard, I guess anecdotally I heard, that eventually the game plan is to get to a system that is, and I don’t really know who to look at when I say this, and so I apologize, but to get to a system where it’s almost mechanized.

In other words, we don’t wait to read the otoliths or do this or do that until the council says, well, I want a cobia assessment and then we go start trying to process however many years’ worth of data that it and that it would actually be mechanized, and those things would be done every year, to take some of that burden off. Now, I realize that’s probably far in the future, because first we have to catch up from where we are, but is that the game plan?

MR. DONALDSON: Well, through GulfFIN, we already do that. When we collect -- When the states collect the otoliths, they process them, and that’s part of the program. It’s to not only collect them, but to process them and put that in a database. Unfortunately, funding for that activity has been inconsistent. It appears that we’ve got funding to begin it again later this year or next year, which is good, but that’s always been part of the GulfFIN program.

National Marine Fisheries Service has taken a different approach, but they are working on erasing that backlog, and so it would be -- I think that’s part of the streamlining process that Clay is talking about, is getting all the stuff ready and, instead of waiting, have it ready to push a button and go.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Anything else on this topic? If not, we’re going to proceed on in our agenda, and that is going to take us to our Updated SEDAR Schedule Review, and I think Mr. Rindone is going to lead us through that discussion.

UPDATED SEDAR SCHEDULE REVIEW

MR. RYAN RINDONE: Yes, ma’am. You will see that we updated the schedule at the end of May, and it notes the last SEDAR Steering Committee date in that little bar underneath the main heading. 2018 is final, which means that we’re not looking for any changes for 2018, and the same goes for 2019.

Our terminal years and start dates were also updated for all of these species that are listed, and so you can keep an eye on those to see when the council should anticipate receiving some of these stock assessments.
Most of the body of work for 2018 -- Well, I guess not most, but about half the body of work for 2018 has been completed. The gray triggerfish and red grouper assessments are going to begin this winter, and we expect the MRIP calibration updates to really kick off in the next couple of months, and that will continue into 2019, and then the FWC will begin a yellowtail snapper benchmark assessment this winter as well. Any questions on the rest of 2018?

Then 2019, and, again, this one is also final. It sees us finishing gray triggerfish and red grouper round about the summertime. Then it’s finishing the MRIP calibration updates in the spring. Our scamp research track will begin in the early months of 2019, and it will continue all the way into late spring of 2020.

We have a vermilion snapper standard assessment, which the council had been trying to squeeze onto the SEDAR schedule for some time, beginning in the fall of 2019 and then a cobia update beginning about the same time. The yellowtail snapper assessment with FWC will be finishing up at the end of 2019, and we will have an update assessment for king mackerel done by the NMFS HMS branch that will run the course of the year, but it could take less time. It just depends on what they have to deal with to update that assessment.

2020 is currently proposed, but we would like to get this finalized as soon as we can, because it helps plan things out for the Science Center, and we have a research track/operational track, and basically what this means is that the operational assessment is going to immediately follow the research track for red snapper, and that will take all of 2020 and 2021. There is a long list of things that the analysts have wanted to do with the red snapper assessment for some time, and they think that this will give them the opportunity to do those things.

We have an operational assessment also for greater amberjack, gag, and scamp, and you will remember that we will have recently finished our scamp research track assessment, and so we will get new information and yield streams for those three stocks, and they are all beginning mid to late 2020, and with gag ending sometime in the early spring of 2021. Then FWC will do a benchmark assessment for mutton snapper, which will begin in the winter of 2020 and continue through the winter of 2021. Any questions for 2020?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Mr. Diaz.
MR. DALE DIAZ: I am still trying to grasp all of this. Sometimes we’ve got a research track, and we follow it right up with an operational assessment, but, in the case of scamp, we’re taking up a slot in two different years to do this, and is that the way it’s always going to be, is it’s going to take two slots to — Once you do a research track, you’re going to have to obligate another slot the following year or another slot to that assessment?

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dr. Porch.

DR. PORCH: Thanks for the question. The idea with the research track is you’re taking away the pressure to end the analysis early so that you can produce the management advice, because, the way the current benchmarks are, you have a hard stop where you have to produce the management advice, and so what that ends up doing is it often cuts premature all the analyses that you would want to conduct for especially a first-time assessment or if you have some really fundamental new questions that you want to ask.

Essentially, by having a research track, you remove those hard deadlines, but, at the same time, you may want to get management advice as soon as possible after the research track, and so then you can schedule that operational assessment shortly after, and it would typically be three or four months or something like that after the research track is completed, and so, yes, the short answer is, for species or stocks where you want to have a research track, then you would have to schedule an operational assessment sometime after that.

It sounds like it prolongs the process, but, to some extent, the research track is kind of running in the background. A lot of the work is running in the background, and we’re still going to have the data workshop, the same as we do for SEDAR benchmarks, because I think that’s where we get the most bang for the buck in terms of participation from stakeholders, and then you can still have an assessment workshop, if it’s needed, and then the review workshop, if needed, but the gist of it is it’s much less demanding on the data providers, because they don’t have to, for a research track, give you the most recent data, or even a perfect dataset, because you are just trying to vet, conceptually, all the inputs and model structures, but then, when you come to the operational assessment, that’s where you want basically perfect data that’s going into it. You want the most recent years of data, and then you want to make sure that everything is processed in the best way possible, according to best practices.
That is my long-winded way of saying that, yes, you would typically have a research track, and then you could schedule an operational assessment right on the heels of that, so it extends your timeline, but it also preserves the scientific integrity of that research track process, so it doesn’t get cut short because you know you have a management deadline, and so, as often happens, we say, okay, we can’t look at this anymore, because we have to produce the management advice.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: Dale, just to follow-up on that, it may look a little funny on the schedule, but it is kind of lined up that way. If you actually look at the quarters -- You’ve got, in 2019, Scamp RT, research track, and, if you go out to the start and end, that’s Q1 of 2019 through Q2 of 2020, and then, when you go down to the 2020 row down here, you see Scamp OA, and that picks up Q3 of 2020, and so right after the research track ended, and goes through Q4 of 2020.

The same type of scenario is being proposed right now for red snapper, and Red Snapper RT, research track/operational assessment, in 2020, which carries through to 2021, and, at the end of 2021, that is when you finish the research track and then the operational assessment that follows, where you will actually get some hard numbers to manage by. Dr. Porch, is that right?

DR. PORCH: Yes, that’s exactly right, and I also want to make it clear that, because the research track is a more thorough process, presumably we won’t have to have research tracks very often, and so you will have -- Instead of research track/operational assessment repeated over and over, it’s every now and again there might be a research track, if there is a compelling reason to do so. The rest of the time, it will be operational assessments.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: I just want to remind the council that the next SSC meeting and the August council meeting need to start thinking about what’s needed on scamp, gag, and greater amberjack.

If you recall, if they are listed as standard type assessments, they’re going to require more data time than is available, and so it’s time to start prioritizing them at the next meeting, and we’ll start with the SSC meeting and get their input and also address does red snapper need to be a research track or not, and I think that’s still a question that we’re thinking about.

CHAIRMAN BOSARGE: All right. Any other feedback from the
group? Seeing none, is there any other business to come before the SEDAR Committee? That gets us right back on schedule.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 18, 2018.)

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