

1 GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2
3 GULF SEDAR COMMITTEE

4
5 Renaissance Battle House Mobile, Alabama

6
7 October 22, 2018

8
9 **VOTING MEMBERS**

10 Tom Frazer.....Florida
11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
12 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
13 Martha Guyas (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida

14
15 **NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

16 Patrick Banks.....Louisiana
17 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
18 Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
19 Doug Boyd.....Texas
20 Roy Crabtree.....NMFS
21 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
22 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
23 Paul Mickle (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi
24 Robin Riechers.....Texas
25 John Sanchez.....Florida
26 Greg Stunz.....Texas
27 Ed Swindell.....Louisiana
28 Lt Mark Zanowicz.....USCG

29
30 **STAFF**

31 Assane Diagne.....Economist
32 Matt Freeman.....Economist
33 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
34 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
35 Karen Hoak.....Administrative & Financial Assistant
36 Morgan Kilgour.....Fishery Biologist
37 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
38 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
39 Ryan Rindone.....Fishery Biologist & SEDAR Liaison
40 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
41 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director

42
43 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

44 Luiz Barbieri.....SSC
45 Avery Bates.....Organized Seafood Association of Alabama, AL
46 Eric Brazer.....Shareholders Alliance
47 Shannon Calay.....SEFSC
48 Michael Drexler.....St. Petersburg, FL

1 Joel Fightmaster.....USCG
2 Traci Floyd.....MDMR, MS
3 Susan Gerhart.....NMFS
4 Tim Griner.....SAFMC
5 Ken Haddad.....Lloyd, FL
6 Joe Jewell.....MDMR, MS
7 Rich Malinowski.....NMFS
8 Lawrence Marino.....LA
9 Clay Porch.....SEFSC
10 Ashford Rosenberg.....Shareholders Alliance
11 Chris Schieble.....LA
12 Jim Zurbrick.....Steinhatchee, FL

13
14
15

- - -

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1
2
3 Table of Contents.....3
4
5 Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes.....4
6
7 Action Guide and Next Steps.....4
8
9 Summary of SEDAR Steering Committee Meeting.....5
10
11 Review Gulf of Mexico SEDAR Schedule.....9
12
13 Adjournment.....27
14
15 - - -
16

1 The Gulf SEDAR Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the Renaissance Battle House,
3 Mobile Alabama, Monday afternoon, October 22, 2018, and was
4 called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

10 **CHAIRMAN TOM FRAZER:** This is the SEDAR Committee. The current
11 members of that committee are myself, Kevin Anson, Martha Guyas,
12 and Dale Diaz. I think, as Leann has pointed out in the past,
13 it's a relatively small committee, but, traditionally, it's been
14 that way, but I certainly welcome comment and participation by
15 every council member as we move forward. The first item of
16 business is Adoption of the Agenda. Can I get a motion?

17
18 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** So moved.

19
20 **MS. MARTHA GUYAS:** Second.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** There is a second by Martha. Any opposition?
23 Seeing none, the agenda is approved. The second item on the
24 agenda is the Approval of the August 2018 Minutes.

25
26 **MR. DIAZ:** So moved.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's moved by Dale Diaz.

29
30 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Second.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's seconded by Kevin Anson. Any opposition?
33 No opposition, and the minutes are approved. The third item is
34 the Action Guide and Next Steps. Dr. Simmons, do you want to
35 take us through that?

36
37 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
38 have a couple of things that we need to cover in this committee
39 today. I am going to go quickly through the summary of the
40 SEDAR Steering Committee report, and there is a longer summary
41 that is also in your briefing materials, but I'm just going to
42 quickly go over that, and you can ask any questions, and we'll
43 try to answer them.

44
45 We also need to talk about the SEDAR Steering Committee request
46 regarding the schedule, and, specifically, the MRIP-Lites,
47 regarding the MRIP calibrations. We need to talk about that and
48 get a recommendation, hopefully, for Full Council, as well as a

1 proposed 2021 schedule, and so those are some action items that
2 we will be looking for feedback on.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so I guess we're going to go ahead
5 and move right into the summary of the SEDAR Steering Committee
6 meeting.

7
8 **SUMMARY OF SEDAR STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

9
10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Okay, and so I'm going to
11 give you the quick version. There was a couple of main points,
12 and it was a very short webinar, and I think Dr. Porch was very
13 sick, but he was on there, but he can fill in any gaps, or Dr.
14 Crabtree, that I may be missing here, but, as I said, the full
15 summary is also available in the briefing book, and that came in
16 later from John Carmichael.

17
18 They asked that, as we move forward with this new process,
19 really for the 2020 schedule and beyond, that we work with
20 Science Center staff to develop a set of terms of reference that
21 is more like a scope of work, and we do it in advance, much
22 further in advance, and then, after we kind of get our scope of
23 work nailed down, as essentially a draft terms of reference,
24 then we move forward with actually the terms of reference.

25
26 I guess you will hear some new terminology with some of this, as
27 we start shifting over to this new process with the SEDAR
28 program and some of these terms that are going to be used, and
29 so they've asked that we do that, and we do it pretty far out.

30
31 We had already developed a draft set of terms of reference for
32 the operational assessments for both gag and greater amberjack,
33 and we put those before the SSC, and I think we're going to get
34 a report on those later on, during Reef Fish, about what the
35 recommendations were regarding those. Then we submitted those
36 recommendations, those draft terms of reference, to the Science
37 Center staff, and so you'll hear more on that tomorrow.

38
39 The other thing that was discussed is us trying to get the red
40 snapper research track terms of reference as well as the joint
41 scamp research track terms of reference as soon as we can, and
42 we're working on the scamp terms of reference, meeting right now
43 between the Gulf and South Atlantic Council, and coordinating
44 that between the council SSC chairs and vice chairs.

45
46 They also asked that we start looking at future priorities, such
47 as the 2021 schedule, which we'll talk about here in a moment,
48 and we also discussed the terminal years for cobia and vermilion

1 snapper, and those were changed for cobia to 2018, and they
2 could not be for vermilion snapper. I think those remained at
3 2017. Is that right, Ryan?

4

5 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Yes.

6

7 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Those changes were reflected in the
8 schedule that we're going to review here in a second. The other
9 major thing we discussed was the MRIP calibration updates, and
10 so, during the review of the 2018 schedule, as Ryan is going to
11 go through here a few of these thing next, we talked about the
12 viability of these calibrations, and especially the concerns
13 with the red snapper, and this was primarily based on a meeting
14 -- I don't know what that meeting was called, Dave, that you had
15 in New Orleans, the Red Snapper Number 4 Workshop, and that was
16 just the week before, and some of those outstanding concerns
17 that were brought up during the discussion of that meeting.

18

19 Basically, the concern was that, if the Science Center moves
20 forward with these MRIP calibrations, using the Fishing Effort
21 Survey, or the FES Survey, for red snapper without developing
22 these calibration protocols for each of the state programs, that
23 the resultant data, or projections, may not be comparable, the
24 ACLs comparable, to the Gulf state data collection programs,
25 which are the basis for our catch monitoring.

26

27 There was quite a bit of discussion about that, and, basically,
28 my understanding is we need to have some recommendations and
29 decisions to the Science Center on how we're going to handle
30 that. We did put it before the SSC, and I think we have a short
31 presentation, or some information, or recommendations from Luiz
32 on that. There was a motion on how they suggested the council
33 consider handling these, and, with that, I will stop there and
34 see if there is any questions.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Any questions from the committee? I just have
37 a question, and it's about the process here. I mean, I think
38 the meeting in New Orleans was an important one, and it might be
39 good if either Dave or Clay or Roy could explain, maybe, to the
40 council kind of the general nature of these issues that we're
41 dealing with of having the three various surveys, just as a
42 little background, before we get into what we want to do with
43 that and before hearing what the SSC kind of recommendations
44 were. Sorry to put you on the spot, but, if you're willing,
45 that would be great.

46

47 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** I was at the workshop, and so we're all aware
48 that MRIP has put out new catch estimates based on a mail survey

1 now, and they are no longer using the Coastal Household
2 Telephone Survey. The estimates that come out of that are, on
3 average, probably twice as high as the catch estimates that come
4 out of MRIP, and you can go on the MRIP website now and pick out
5 comparisons for most species, and you can look at how the
6 catches differ over time.

7
8 With red snapper, we knew it was more complicated than that,
9 because we're not -- If you think about it, we're not using MRIP
10 to estimate the catch of red snapper for the private sector at
11 this point. We're using Texas Parks and Wildlife, LA Creel,
12 Mississippi Tails 'n Scales, Snapper Check, and Florida has
13 their Gulf Reef Fish Survey that is based on an endorsement that
14 they have.

15
16 LA Creel has been certified by the MRIP program, and Tails 'n
17 Scales has been certified. Snapper Check has been certified,
18 and I anticipate that the Florida survey will be certified quite
19 soon, and so, when you look at those surveys, they give catch
20 estimates for red snapper that are more in line with what the
21 old MRIP catches are, and they are not producing these very high
22 catch estimates, and so, if that's what the states are going to
23 use to manage red snapper, which seems to be the case for the
24 foreseeable future, then really we need calibrations for all of
25 those surveys, and we need the assessment to be done with the
26 same survey currency, so to speak, that we're using to manage
27 the fishery.

28
29 The problem is we don't have calibration factors for those
30 surveys, and so that's really why the recommendation came off to
31 hold off on the MRIP-Lite type of assessments and let the MRIP
32 folks and the consultants and state folks work on coming up with
33 calibration models for the state surveys, which they're going to
34 try and do over the course of 2019, and then factor all of that
35 into the new benchmark stock assessment for red snapper and then
36 generate new catch assessment advice out of that.

37
38 Now, to complicate things even more, LA Creel, as you all know,
39 is not a single-species survey. It's the recreational catch
40 estimate survey for Louisiana, and so that's everything, and the
41 Gulf Reef Fish Survey is reef fish species, and so both
42 Louisiana and Florida are going to produce an additional set of
43 catch estimates for reef fish, and so, for 2018, we're going to
44 have two sets of catch estimates in Florida, one through the
45 Gulf Reef Fish Survey and another through the MRIP survey.

46
47 These same calibration problems exist for -- At least for all
48 reef fish species, because assuming that Florida is going to

1 want to use the Gulf Reef Fish Survey as the basis of
2 management, and considering that we have stocks like gag and red
3 grouper that are almost entirely Florida harvest, we're going to
4 have to deal with that when we do the assessments for those, and
5 so it's not just a red snapper problem.

6
7 It's more complicated, and then there are a lot of nuances in
8 that then. For example, Snapper Check is not a year-round
9 survey, and so the discard estimates are coming out of the old
10 MRIP survey, and so it's become a pretty complicated system.

11
12 Now, we do have the ability to take the new FES catch estimates
13 and convert them back into the old MRIP currency, and we can do
14 that in the short-term, but we're going to need to deal with
15 these calibration issues, starting at least in 2020, and as soon
16 as we have these statewide survey models, and it's going to
17 interject a new source of uncertainty into all of this, I think,
18 and I don't know, Clay, if you want to make some comments on it,
19 but that's my general impression of what is happening.

20
21 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** Roy has it exactly right, and there is even a
22 further level of complication, in that the calibration back in
23 time changes from the calibration between the FES and the CHTS,
24 and so there is about a twofold difference, for instance, in the
25 effort estimates with the mail survey versus the telephone
26 survey in recent years, but it's less of a difference as you go
27 back in time, and so eventually it's down to zero, and so it's
28 sort of an attenuated calibration going back in time.

29
30 Then, on top of it, although the MRIP folks have certified the
31 methods that are being used by the states, they haven't actually
32 agreed that those methods, as they are applied, are actually
33 better than the FES estimates, and so we've got several issues
34 here.

35
36 We need to find out what are the best estimates, best available
37 science, that we should use in the assessment, and then, if we
38 end up using -- Say it comes out that we decide FES are the best
39 available estimates. If we're managing for red snapper, or any
40 other species, based on the state surveys, then we have to have
41 that additional calibration on top of it, and so it's making the
42 assessment much more complicated, and we need some closure, in
43 terms of what we should be using for best available science, let
44 alone for management.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Roy, and thanks, Clay. I think that
47 helps a lot, actually. I think, with that as background, Ryan,
48 I think we can probably move on to the SEDAR schedule, and we

1 have the SSC recommendations following that as well.

2
3 **REVIEW GULF OF MEXICO SEDAR SCHEDULE**
4

5 **MR. RINDONE:** All right. The schedule that you guys should have
6 in front of you is dated October 3. Since this schedule was
7 provided to you guys, we have had a call between SEDAR and the
8 Science Center, to talk about some scheduling, and there is a
9 couple of little tweaks, I think.

10
11 For 2018, obviously that's almost over, and so what's on there
12 is what we're working with. One of the decisions that you guys,
13 obviously, need to make is do we continue with these MRIP
14 calibration updates and keep them on the schedule, or do we
15 forego them in the short-term, with the understanding that those
16 data will be considered in the species-specific assessments
17 moving into the future, and so that's one decision.

18
19 A decision that was made over the call is for, in 2019, for
20 vermilion snapper, and that's scheduled to be a standard
21 assessment, and, instead of using 2018 final data for the
22 terminal year, we're going to use 2017, and, for the
23 projections, we're going to use the provisional 2018 landings to
24 help do the projections for 2019 and beyond, or 2020 and beyond,
25 by the time that's done, and so that's one minor change there.
26 Looking at the rest of this, it looks pretty good, to me.

27
28 If you scroll down to 2020 and 2021, 2020 and 2021 are still
29 listed as proposed. We need to be thinking about 2020 as being
30 more or less locked in place though. Remember we talked a lot
31 about, in previous meetings, about how, the further out that we
32 can lock this schedule, the more in the long run we're going to
33 be able to get, because, whenever we make last-minute changes to
34 the schedule, we end up losing something, and so it costs a lot,
35 in terms of re-tasking staff and data production and analysis,
36 et cetera, and so it's really best to lock this schedule down as
37 far out in advance as we possibly can.

38
39 In 2020, we are starting a research track for red snapper, and
40 we are doing operational assessments for gag and greater
41 amberjack. Now, the reason that the greater amberjack terminal
42 year is set at 2017 is because, in 2018, we changed the fishing
43 year for the recreational sector, and so, in order to not
44 confound the assessment by that regulatory change, we just said
45 that a 2017 terminal year for greater amberjack would be fine.

46
47 Then we also have the scamp research track, which may use 2017
48 data, or it may use data that are a little older than that.

1 Because it's a research track, it doesn't much matter, and, in
2 this call, we discussed that, as long as they use enough data
3 post-IFQ program implementation to be able to get some contrast
4 between the pre-IFQ and post-IFQ years, that's fine.

5
6 When we do the operational assessment for scamp in 2021,
7 whatever the most recent year of available data is, those are
8 the data that will be used for that operational assessment, and
9 the same for the operational assessment for red snapper in 2021.

10
11 Now, we also talked about a research track for red grouper, and,
12 again, it may use data up to 2019. It may use some older data
13 than that, and we don't have a delivery date scheduled for that
14 yet though. We're just proposing that to the Center at this
15 point. Is there any questions on the schedule in general?

16
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Bosarge.

18
19 **MS. LEANN BOSARGE:** Thank you, and I'm not on your committee.
20 That greater amberjack in 2020, I assume we did have the
21 terminal year as 2018, and now we're listing it as 2017, and
22 that's the change you're talking about, because we changed that
23 season, but, if I remember correctly, the reason we wanted to
24 have that terminal year a little later, because this is a 2020
25 assessment slot, was because we had made that change in size
26 limits, and we wanted to get as many years of data in there, to
27 see if that was having an effect, and so I guess I'm wondering
28 which one outweighs the other.

29
30 **MR. RINDONE:** I don't know that I have the information to answer
31 that, and so it would take actually doing it to be able to tell
32 you which one will ultimately outweigh the other, and I don't
33 know if Dr. Porch wants to weigh-in on that, but I don't know
34 that there's an easy answer to that question.

35
36 **DR. PORCH:** I will look into it further, but I don't see why we
37 need to have a 2017 end year in 2020. That's a bit old, and it
38 seems to me that it would be reasonable to make it 2018, but I
39 will check and make sure that I'm not missing something.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Carrie.

42
43 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, and so I think one of
44 the reasons we suggested this, and I think we talked a little
45 bit about this at the SSC meeting, and so I don't know if you
46 want to also comment on this, Luiz, but we had that change, and
47 it was a change in fishing year for the recreational sector, and
48 we were trying to let that effect take place after this

1 operational assessment.

2
3 If it looks like that's not going to complicate the assessment
4 and that data can be put in there, maybe the Science Center
5 could accommodate that and provide those types of information,
6 but I don't know that they can at this stage. We just submitted
7 the terms of reference, and so maybe we could talk about that in
8 the planning, and I'm not sure.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Clay.

11
12 **DR. PORCH:** I don't think so, because we'll still be doing the
13 assessment on a calendar-year basis, but it's just the timing of
14 when the fishery occurs is a little different, and so I don't
15 think it would complicate it too, too much. Again, I will see
16 if I get chatted here and anybody tells me different, but I
17 think we can accommodate it without too much trouble.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Carrie, to that point?

20
21 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Just one more thing. I think --
22 Now it's coming back to me. The other issue we had with
23 amberjack is it seemed very sensitive to changes in management
24 with the indices, and particularly it's primarily a recreational
25 fishery, and so I think that was the other suggestion when we
26 were discussing this during the terms of reference, and there is
27 not a whole lot of other fishery-independent indices that were
28 driving the assessment, and so that's just more information.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dale.

31
32 **MR. DIAZ:** I think this question is for Ryan. Ryan, based on
33 the conversation and reading the documents, it looks to me like,
34 from my point of view, it's probably best to wait to use the
35 MRIP calibrations to be included in the next stock assessment
36 for each one of these stocks, but, having said that, you said
37 something a minute ago.

38
39 In 2018, we've got the MRIP calibration updates, and also in
40 2019, and so are these MRIP calibrations actually needed to feed
41 into those stock assessments in the future, or is there -- Is
42 that actually needed?

43
44 **MR. RINDONE:** They are data that are available to be included in
45 the assessment. Whether they are ultimately used for a
46 particular species, they have been used in the past, and
47 sometimes they haven't, but it just depends on the species and
48 the quality of the data.

1
2 The new APAIS and FES estimates that are being used with the
3 revamped MRIP surveys are considered to be better than the old
4 way of doing things, and so it's likely that they will be used
5 in those following assessments. The advantage of taking those
6 off the schedule now is it frees up some of the logistical time
7 burdens on the folks that are all involved in the SEDAR process,
8 which includes council and academic staff, the SSCs, the Center,
9 et cetera, to focus on the other species that are listed there.

10
11 For these species -- Like for gag, when we do the operational
12 assessment of gag and greater amberjack in 2020, we will look at
13 the new MRIP calibrated data then, whether we do the MRIP-Lite
14 updates now or not. It's going to be looked at again then
15 anyway, and so the issue with the MRIP calibration updates --

16
17 The thing that you have to remember is that all you're getting
18 with those are new and updated to not present day, but the most
19 recent year of data, for the landings and the effort side of the
20 recreational data. You're not getting new age or length
21 composition data, and you're not getting your fishery-
22 independent indices of abundance updated. None of that
23 additional work that happens. Like the recruitment analyses,
24 none of that is going to happen. It's just the recreational
25 side of the data, and correct me if I'm wrong, but it doesn't
26 include an analysis of discards either.

27
28 **DR. PORCH:** Well, I mean, it's a change in effort, and so it
29 will scale up the discards as well, and so it's going to -- We
30 will just be replacing the recreational time streams, and the
31 idea, or at least the original concern, was that, because this
32 calibration is attenuated back in time, and so there is no
33 calibration when you get back to 1981 or so, and then a twofold
34 calibration, at least for private recreational, in the most
35 recent years, and it actually could change status, and I think,
36 for some of the MRIP-Lite updates for the South Atlantic
37 Council, it did change status for a couple of stocks, and so
38 there is that potential.

39
40 The problem in the Gulf is it's not completely clear, at least
41 to me, what set of statistics we should be using now, and I
42 think we need to have a more thorough review and more
43 conversation with the MRIP folks and make a fairly clear
44 decision of are we going with FES or are we going with the state
45 surveys, and then you're going to have a whole series of
46 calibrations.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I have Roy, and then I have Martha.

1
2 **DR. CRABTREE:** It's gotten really complicated, and, if we did
3 the MRIP calibration updates, it would be difficult to implement
4 the catch levels that come out of that without updating the
5 allocation timelines on these, and for some of these stocks,
6 like red snapper in particular, that is pretty old by now, and
7 that, I think, would have a lot of implications.

8
9 Some of these other stocks may be more recent, but it's not like
10 you could just implement the new numbers and use them, and so
11 the whole scenario has gotten more complicated.

12
13 Now, we do have stocks like gray snapper, for example, and the
14 new Gulf Reef Fish Survey stops at Collier County in Florida,
15 and so you're going to have a mixture of different surveys used
16 for that, just because it's over a pretty broad jurisdiction,
17 and then we've got the red grouper assessment that I think is
18 underway now, which my understanding is they are using the new
19 FES survey recreational landings in that, but, if Florida and
20 the council wants to base management on the Gulf Reef Fish
21 Survey landings, then we're going to have to find way to
22 translate the outcome of the assessment into the Gulf Reef Fish
23 Survey.

24
25 Now, I'm assuming that people are going to want to use the new
26 Gulf Reef Fish Survey estimates, because Florida is spending a
27 lot of money to generate these, and so I'm assuming that's where
28 we're going to wind up, but it's become more complicated, but I
29 think my recommendation at this point would be not to do the
30 MRIP calibration updates, because I just don't think we're going
31 to be able to do much with the results that would come out from
32 them.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Martha.

35
36 **MS. GUYAS:** My question was, I guess, related to that. At what
37 point, and I guess at what stage, will these judgments be made
38 as to which is the best available science, the state surveys or
39 FES or old MRIP or what. I mean, is this happening like on a
40 piecemeal basis, assessment-by-assessment? I am just trying to
41 understand how the pieces fit together here. Luiz has his hand
42 up, by the way.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Barbieri, I invite you to the podium.

45
46 **DR. LUIZ BARBIERI:** I have been controlling myself not to jump
47 into this conversation, but, putting a different hat on, in
48 terms of -- I mean, this is not going to be yet the SSC report,

1 but it really ties to this discussion, and so, first of all,
2 just to review where we are with this, you may remember that,
3 four or five years ago, this whole process started when we
4 really wanted to evaluate a number of pilot studies that would
5 be implemented in the Gulf to look at red snapper recreational
6 catches, recreational catch and effort and landings.

7
8 The idea was to develop and test these new methodologies and
9 then eventually come to some process to either pick some, and we
10 don't necessarily need to have the exact same survey throughout
11 the Gulf, and there are differences in the fisheries, in the
12 composition of the fisheries, in different parts of the Gulf
13 that actually could allow for the use of different surveys in
14 different areas that the statistical consultants tell us that
15 those differences are small enough or easy to reconcile that you
16 could still tie them together and get a picture of landings,
17 discards, and abundance trends for red snapper, and perhaps some
18 of these other reef fish as well throughout the Gulf.

19
20 This Red Snapper 4 Workshop meeting that the Gulf States
21 Commission helped us put together, supported for us to have this
22 discussion, brought together all the states and the MRIP staff,
23 and there were several council members that were present as well
24 there, to have this discussion of how do we tie them together,
25 and is there a way to tie them together to bring some kind of a
26 calibration between the surveys or look at the nature of the
27 methodologies and the data coming out and try to reconcile,
28 because now we have five different surveys in the Gulf for five
29 different states, in many cases looking at the same species, the
30 issue of currency across the entire geographic range there of
31 red snapper for the assessment.

32
33 The bottom line is we have a report that's going to be coming
34 out, and it's now under review, that summarizes some of the
35 recommendations that came out of this meeting, and the meeting
36 didn't resolve really anything other than we had statistical
37 consultants there that became very familiar with the process,
38 and we basically prepared them to get this data.

39
40 All the states sent, submitted, their data to the process, and
41 so MRIP and the MRIP consultants were looking at those data and
42 looking at trends and patterns and the nature of the data to
43 explore ways to find some kind of calibration. One of the
44 issues that was discussed there at this meeting was, instead of
45 picking one or the other, either MRIP or a state survey, that
46 there might be a way to generate an integrated estimate that
47 integrates the MRIP data with the state data, and, in some
48 situations, this may be appropriate.

1
2 Of course, we will have the different surveys, and we will have
3 to find a weighting. In some situations, you can use 80 percent
4 of the weight is going to be on the state survey and 20 percent
5 on MRIP, and some other states, depending on the nature of the
6 survey, is going to have to be the opposite. Most of the weight
7 is going to be on MRIP and less weight on the state survey.

8
9 Right now, we are in the process of trying to develop a way
10 forward to look at these very questions of how much can we
11 generate integrated estimates for this and are they compatible
12 or not, and, obviously, over the next year or so, we are going
13 to have the state surveys being implemented as part of the EFP
14 anyway, and so that gives us some time to continue looking into
15 this.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Do you have a question for Luiz, Greg? No?
18 Thanks, Luiz. I appreciate it. Dr. Stunz.

19
20 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** I just have a quick comment, mainly for the
21 council, to remind -- Thank you for recognizing me. I'm not on
22 your committee, but, during the Data Collection Committee on
23 Wednesday, we're going to discuss this further. There is some
24 MRIP presentations and other things to continue broadly some of
25 these discussions.

26
27 I mean, I know here we're trying to figure out how to
28 incorporate it into the planning and scheduling process, but
29 there is more to the story, I guess is what I'm saying, and
30 we'll be talking about it on Wednesday, and so I'm not sure how
31 it's all going to come together for Full Council, but there is
32 more to the discussion than what we're having here.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Sure. I appreciate that, and we'll probably
35 take that information and come back in Full Council and probably
36 make a decision here. Martha, did you have a question?

37
38 **MS. GUYAS:** Well, no, and I guess more an observation. It
39 sounds like it's going to be a while before we really know how
40 to handle multiple surveys here, and so we're at least looking
41 at 2020 or 2021, or maybe longer than that, before we're
42 actually able to use or make a decision about how to handle
43 these multiple datasets, and is that more or less right, because
44 it sounds like there is not a timeline yet, sort of, other than
45 we know it's going to take a while.

46
47 **DR. BARBIERI:** Hopefully not that long, and so the idea is, as
48 we get this report, and the data is actually being sent, if it

1 hasn't already been sent, to the statistical consultants to look
2 at from the different Gulf states.

3
4 Until they have a good look at that data and can give us some
5 idea of what's possible and what's not, and perhaps we organize
6 another meeting to discuss the next steps, we won't know, but
7 what we are hoping is that, between now and perhaps six months
8 to a year, at least we're going to have to have some level of
9 direction on how to proceed, and we may not have all the answers
10 to kind of tie them all together, but at least have a sense of
11 direction going forward.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Luiz. Dale.

14
15 **MR. DIAZ:** This is back to Ryan, and I feel like it's probably
16 too late, but I have to ask the question. If we were to decide
17 not to use these MRIP calibration updates, is it too late to
18 maybe try to move something up for 2019 and try to take
19 advantage? These spots are so -- We've got so few spots to get
20 updates and assessments done, and I just hate to feel like we're
21 not fully utilizing them, and so is there any potential there,
22 or are we already past the window?

23
24 **MR. RINDONE:** You're past the window.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** To that point, Leann?

27
28 **MS. BOSARGE:** Well, but we sort of could still use it, Dale.
29 We'll be using it, it sounds like, to develop more calibrations.
30 We're just not going to be plugging those into update
31 assessments, but we're going to use that time to develop the
32 rest of the calibrations that we need between the states and
33 this and that, so that our assessments will work when we get
34 around to them, right?

35
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes. My discussions would indicate that that
37 time is not being wasted. There is still a lot of work to be
38 going on here, and so I think we're in okay shape that way.
39 Ryan.

40
41 **MR. RINDONE:** Are you guys going to make a decision about
42 whether or not to do those MRIP calibration updates now, to
43 recommend something to the Full Council, or are you going to
44 wait until Full Council?

45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think we still have an SSC presentation,
47 right, and so maybe we can hear that, and then, as Greg said, we
48 might have a little more information on Wednesday, and certainly

1 by Full Council we'll come back, I think, with a recommendation.
2 Ryan, would you want to move on to the SSC presentation?

3

4 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so that would be Tab I, Number 6,
7 and Luiz.

8

9 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first slide goes
10 directly into this topic, and so the SSC had a lot of
11 discussion, and a few members had been actually present at that
12 meeting, and they had been well informed about the outcome of
13 the meeting in New Orleans, and so the SSC expressed a lot of
14 concerns about going forward with the MRIP-Lites, and, several
15 of these points that we have concerns about, you have already
16 brought up, like updating just the recreational fisheries data,
17 but not any of the other data inputs.

18

19 Because of the magnitude of change in this effort, and it's so
20 large, it's really unpredictable how these assessments would
21 turn out without having a much more thorough and detailed type
22 of benchmark, or a more thorough assessment process, other than
23 just a basic turn-of-the-crank.

24

25 Another concern was that, the way that we understood, and the
26 Science Center representative at our meeting was helping us
27 explain, the terminal year for those assessments would be used
28 as the last one for the new assessments, for the MRIP-Lites, and
29 so, basically, all the data streams would be the same up to that
30 terminal year, whatever it was, 2015 or 2016 or 2017, and then
31 just the recreational time series of landings would be updated.

32

33 We felt that that would not reflect the most recent data for
34 some of these stocks, and that might be problematic as well, and
35 then, of course, this issue of inconsistency between the MRIP-
36 calibrated data and the state surveys that are either already
37 certified or in the very final stages of certification.

38

39 We are still trying to understand the nature of those
40 differences and what may be causing them, and I think, after we
41 understand them better, we can have a better idea on how to
42 create those weights for the integrated MRIP and state survey
43 estimates that we will be developing, but, in the meantime, that
44 is still in development, and we just felt that we are not ready
45 for that.

46

47 As Dr. Crabtree also pointed out, there is the issue of the
48 currencies, so to speak, of the values that will come out, in

1 terms of catch advice, out of these MRIP-Lite assessments and
2 then what we have on the books now and what is being used to
3 monitor the fishery, and so there are inconsistencies there that
4 the SSC just felt very uncomfortable with in recommending going
5 forward with the MRIP-Lites, and so our recommendation was to
6 just skip the MRIP-Lites, and perhaps use that time to further
7 look into the nature of this data, work with the MRIP
8 consultants in addressing those calibration issues, but then
9 have these assessments -- Because some of them are scheduled for
10 next year and the year after anyway, and they're going to be
11 full operational-level assessments that can estimate reference
12 points and actually provide catch advice, and so why not wait
13 for some of those and have something that is more thorough and
14 complete, in terms of analysis? I will pause there, Mr.
15 Chairman, if there are any --

16
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Does anybody have any questions for Luiz at
18 this point? Carry on.

19
20 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you, sir. We also discussed how the terms
21 of reference for the 2020 operational assessments for gag and
22 greater amberjack, and you already had some of that discussion
23 here regarding greater amberjack, the terminal year of data to
24 be used versus what's going to be used for gag, and those are
25 the recommendations of the SSC, given some of the issues that
26 came out, in terms of the data for greater amberjack, changes in
27 management and regulations and the fishing year, and a whole
28 number of factors that we thought might be confounding the
29 assessment data inputs, and that it would be better to use the
30 data through 2017 as terminal for greater amberjack.

31
32 For gag, we really would like to use the latest data possible,
33 and that assessment is planned for 2020, and so we are trying to
34 go with 2019, to make sure that the most recent data, including
35 the impact of some of these environmental events, could be
36 integrated into this next assessment.

37
38 A couple more points that we made, and I am bringing this up
39 just because, of course, it interferes with the schedule of
40 SEDAR, and perhaps the workload that the Science Center has to
41 undertake, and so explore the use of a biomass dynamic model for
42 greater amberjack, and this is really because the last couple of
43 assessments, perhaps the last one, was an age-structured model
44 that was used, but, before that, we really used a biomass
45 dynamic model that is like aggregated biomass, instead of having
46 the age composition explicitly accounted for in a model.

47
48 Considering the quality of data, of ages, for amberjack, we felt

1 that it would be informative to have both scenarios evaluated in
2 this assessment, and the Science Center representative at our
3 meeting actually felt that this would not be too difficult, Dr.
4 Porch, given that this was something that could be developed
5 within the framework of SS3.

6
7 Of course, consider calibration of the MRIP state surveys for
8 recreational data, and that could be either using, in some
9 situations, the state surveys, using that integrated approach,
10 and we're going to have some time for that, and then developing
11 reference points that would be for separate sexes as well as
12 combined sexes, for gag, and I didn't put that there, since, for
13 gag, they are protogynous hermaphrodites, and it's really the
14 science indicates the best way for you to estimate reference
15 points for them would be using combined sexes that account for
16 not just females, but males as well, and so, if you have an
17 erosion in the number of males in the population, you can
18 actually account for that in your reference points and your
19 assessment framework.

20
21 The last assessment for gag couldn't really integrate the
22 combined sexes. I mean, all the runs that came out of combined
23 sexes were not considered plausible, the results, and so the SSC
24 was kind of sort of forced to go with females only for gag, for
25 reference points that reflected females, instead of having
26 combined sexes, and so we would like to explore that again. I
27 will pause there again, Mr. Chairman.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Any questions? I just have one science
30 question, real quick. When you're looking at the ratio of
31 females to males in the gag population, and I was looking in the
32 briefing materials, it's somewhere like thirty-something, right,
33 and that's present. What has it been historically? Do you have
34 any idea?

35
36 **DR. BARBIERI:** For gag?

37
38 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes.

39
40 **DR. BARBIERI:** Well, the last assessment had males at about 2
41 percent, right, when the normal level is between 18 and 22, is
42 what the historical studies actually indicate.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes, and that's super interesting, obviously,
45 and so I'm just trying to figure out how you factor that into
46 the stock assessment. Is that an indicator, I guess, of less
47 potential reproductive output in part of the population?

48

1 **DR. BARBIERI:** Well, there is the sexual maturity and the
2 transition functions that go into the assessment explicitly, but
3 it's also the way that you estimate your reference points that
4 account for both sexes, in that case.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you. I actually have one more question,
7 now that I'm thinking about it, and so I'm intrigued by this
8 idea of using -- This Point 2 here is the calibration of the
9 MRIP and state surveys, or some hybrid of both, perhaps, and
10 Florida has a multispecies kind of sampling program, as does LA
11 Creel, right, and I'm not sure what Mississippi and Alabama plan
12 to do in the future. Are you moving towards a multispecies type
13 of a sampling effort? Paul.

14
15 **DR. PAUL MICKLE:** To answer the question, it would be great, but
16 it takes money.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I don't have any.

19
20 **DR. MICKLE:** Well, I was asking, just to put it on the record.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Kevin.

23
24 **MR. ANSON:** Ditto.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Carry on, Luiz.

27
28 **DR. BARBIERI:** Just to clarify, by the way, because gag is
29 almost exclusively a Florida fishery, the Gulf Reef Fish Survey,
30 fortunately, was developed already to integrate the two, and so
31 our final estimates already integrate what comes out of the Gulf
32 Reef Fish Survey itself and then MRIP, in which there are final
33 estimates that already integrate the two. Not to gloat or
34 anything, but --

35
36 Then one other factor that I think influences the SEDAR schedule
37 and the workload is this approach being explored, developed, by
38 the Science Center about right-sizing stock assessments. This
39 is something that we have discussed over time with you, and the
40 SSC has tried to bring it up to your attention several times,
41 and I know that, in Florida, we have been working with our
42 Division of Marine Fisheries management in developing something
43 similar that would better align the data quantity and quality
44 that you have for different stocks with the type of approach,
45 assessment approach, that you use.

46
47 You actually try to match, and so you don't actually use a
48 super-sophisticated and very data-intensive methodology for a

1 stock where the data is not as available, and so, even though
2 you use that methodology, the uncertainty would be so large for
3 those stocks that you end up in the same place.

4
5 Going with something that is simpler, that better tries to match
6 the data available to the assessment approach being used, is
7 really a very good way to develop a good throughput of your
8 assessment schedule and perhaps maximize the efficiency that the
9 Science Center is trying to complete these assessments.

10
11 The SSC applauds this approach, and, right there, I listed the
12 three steps that the Science Center presented as them having to
13 go through now to come out with some recommendations of how to
14 better do this match between data quality for certain stocks and
15 the assessment types being used. That completes my report, Mr.
16 Chairman.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you. Are there any other questions for
19 Luiz before we let him sit back down? Clay.

20
21 **DR. PORCH:** Thank you, Chair. A couple of points. One, I
22 support this idea of stock assessment prioritization and also
23 classification and right-sizing stock assessments commensurate
24 with the data. Sometimes we're trying to chase every little
25 piece, and it takes an enormous amount of effort for relatively
26 little gain.

27
28 However, I think we need to be a little more circumspect in some
29 of the recommendations, for instance with greater amberjack,
30 saying let's do a lumped biomass model, because we used to do it
31 that way, and we rejected it for a reason, and, in particular,
32 the projections didn't perform very well, and they were
33 nonsense.

34
35 I think what we can do is look at the most informative pieces of
36 information in the greater amberjack assessment and then look at
37 other models that might be more appropriate that just hinge on
38 those key datasets, and so I think it's fair to look at some
39 alternative models. I wouldn't pigeonhole it and say let's look
40 at lumped biomass again.

41
42 The other thing that I want to caution against is developing a
43 big laundry list of things to look at and still calling it an
44 operational assessment. If that list gets really long, we need
45 to consider making something a research track, and so let's be
46 careful with gag.

47
48 If it really is limited to just looking at both sexes combined,

1 that's just a switch in the assessment model, and it's not very
2 hard to do. There is theoretical issues there, but I won't get
3 into it here, and Luiz knows what I am talking about, but just I
4 do want to caution.

5
6 When we develop these scoping documents, the precursors to the
7 terms of reference, keep in mind that an operational assessment
8 should basically be using the structure that was approved in a
9 previous benchmark or research track, and minor changes may be
10 permitted, but, the more things you add, the longer that
11 assessment becomes, and, at some point, it really should be a
12 research track.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you. Go ahead, Luiz.

15
16 **DR. BARBIERI:** Mr. Chair, can I just address that real quickly,
17 because those are very good points. In the case of the
18 amberjack, what we really would like to see -- I mean, it more,
19 perhaps, would be like a research track kind of thing.

20
21 It's basically, when you have a biomass dynamic model, and then
22 you look at your -- Because there will be an age-structured
23 model, right, that's already coded and set up to run, and so you
24 can actually see what the influence of having those explicit
25 selectivities and the age composition integrated into that
26 process, even if the data is not very -- If the age data is not
27 that reliable, and so it's more a -- Not to choose, and this is
28 what I'm clarifying. It's not to choose a biomass dynamic
29 model, but it's add that as a way -- Just to have alternative
30 models that are looked at, so you can have comparisons.

31
32 On the gag, because Skyler was there at the SSC meeting, and she
33 explained that -- Remember that, for SEDAR 34, I believe, the
34 last benchmark for gag and greater amberjack, for gag, the
35 separate sexes code is already in there. I mean, those outputs
36 were produced, but it's just that, the way that the assessment
37 turned out, the scenarios did not seem plausible to the SSC, and
38 the SSC chose to go with the separate sexes, because the outcome
39 was not as reliable, we felt, and so I don't think it would take
40 a whole lot, in this case, because I think the code would
41 already be there.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Carrie.

44
45 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just
46 had a question. Since this is the first time, and I think we've
47 talked a little bit about this, we're doing an operational
48 assessment without it following a research track, and we are

1 kind of potentially, from what I'm gathering from you, asking
2 for potentially too much in those terms of reference, do you see
3 that coming back to us before the January SSC meeting, or do you
4 see us making some different decision or having a workload issue
5 by the Steering Committee meeting? How do you see that feedback
6 working, as far as when we are asking too much for those types
7 of assessments?
8

9 **DR. BARBIERI:** Well, I think that the SSC would defer to the
10 SEDAR Steering Committee and to the Science Center, in terms of
11 this, and, I mean, from an SSC perspective, and I want to be
12 explicit about this --
13

14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Hold on, Luiz. The question is actually
15 directed at Clay. Sorry, Clay, and I know you're on a side
16 conversation there, but I'm going to have Carrie repeat her
17 question for you.
18

19 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** We submitted some operational
20 assessment terms of reference to the Science Center after the
21 SSC meeting, but we don't have a research track before those to
22 follow this operational assessment process, because it's kind of
23 outside the new process, so to speak.
24

25 I was kind of gathering, from what you were suggesting, that
26 maybe the SSC and staff were asking too much in those terms of
27 reference, potentially, and so would you give us a letter or
28 send that information or give us that information back before
29 the next January SSC meeting, or how do you see that working, or
30 would it not occur until the SEDAR Steering Committee in May, or
31 how do you see that happening?
32

33 **DR. PORCH:** Ideally, when you send it to us, we will review it
34 and get back as soon as possible, before a Steering Committee,
35 because it would be nice if we kind of negotiate among ourselves
36 before we get to the Steering Committee and then start from
37 scratch.
38

39 I am just putting out the caution there that let's keep
40 operational assessments as close as possible to the assessment
41 that's been approved, except for relatively minor changes, and I
42 agree the specific one that Luiz mentioned, and that's why I
43 said it's a couple of switches, and it's a little bit of work,
44 but it's not too onerous, but let's just be careful that we
45 don't make a long laundry list of things. Then it really
46 becomes a research track assessment.
47

48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Clay. Luiz, to that point?

1
2 **DR. BARBIERI:** I just want to make a point regarding gag
3 specifically. As a longstanding SSC member, the last time, the
4 recommendation that we brought before you actually resulted in
5 bad management or in bad advice, and that's my personal feeling
6 about it.

7
8 We basically selected an assessment outcome that showed a stock
9 not overfished and not undergoing overfishing, and then the
10 council had to somewhat backpedal from that recommendation and
11 implement different management measures in response to public
12 outcry, the industry wasn't catching, and so we feel
13 particularly sensitive about that issue, since we feel our role
14 as your scientific advisors is very important, and we want to
15 make sure that, when we put something in front of you, we have a
16 fairly high degree of confidence that our advice is reliable and
17 trustworthy.

18
19 This is one of the things why, looking at gag, we felt that, if
20 there is any way that we can accommodate, perhaps, looking at
21 what may have gone -- At this last assessment, what may have
22 gone wrong that generated a final outcome that did not align, I
23 guess, with the reality of the stock status and put you in that
24 position, and we just wanted to express that as a way for us to
25 have something done more carefully.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I appreciate that. Clay.

28
29 **DR. PORCH:** I just wanted to say that we agree completely with
30 that. Luiz will remember, when we presented it, we also had
31 concerns about the assessment, and it wasn't able to reconcile
32 the indices, and there was clearly some sort of conflict in the
33 data that we weren't able to reconcile, and so we agree that we
34 want to look at it very carefully and see if we can diagnose
35 what the problem was, because obviously something did go wrong.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Clay. Are there any other questions
38 or comments at this point? Kevin.

39
40 **MR. ANSON:** Not so much for Luiz, and I don't know if he's done
41 and he can go sit, I guess.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Luiz, be seated, my friend.

44
45 **DR. BARBIERI:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

46
47 **MR. ANSON:** Martha, I know it probably has been brought up in
48 prior meetings, but, for the FWC assessments, do you all get any

1 funding from NOAA for that, or does it come out of your internal
2 budget?
3
4 **MS. GUYAS:** Luiz?
5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Luiz, stand up.
7
8 **MR. ANSON:** I thought maybe you knew, and I was going to let him
9 go sit down.
10
11 **DR. BARBIERI:** I was just reading a text from somebody, and so I
12 missed your question.
13
14 **MR. ANSON:** I am curious as to how do you pay for the
15 assessments that FWC does that are essentially used by the
16 Science Center or the council, like hogfish and yellowtail
17 snapper? What's your funding for that? Is that internal?
18
19 **DR. BARBIERI:** We just use our regular saltwater fishing license
20 and saltwater products license dollars, and we supplement that
21 with some Sportfish Restoration dollars, and so we take out a --
22 I mean, in a way, even though it comes across as we are paying
23 for those, because those are mostly Florida fisheries, the ones
24 that we do, we actually work together with the Science Center,
25 and they provide a lot of the other data for those species that
26 we don't necessarily have easy access to, and so, for us, it's
27 just a matter of doing that model development and running the
28 assessment itself, but we pay for those out of our regular
29 budgets.
30
31 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, sir.
32
33 **MS. GUYAS:** And out of both sides of your heart, right?
34
35 **DR. BARBIERI:** That's right, yes, the two sides.
36
37 **MR. ANSON:** Just one other question then to Dr. Porch.
38 Essentially, you've got funding in place now for five
39 assessments for the Gulf, and when you look at now the research
40 track and the operational assessments, the research track is
41 what I recall had essentially two slots that it would require
42 the assessment biologist for, and then operational assessments
43 would fulfill one of those slots, and is that correct?
44
45 **DR. PORCH:** Not exactly. The problem right now isn't a limit of
46 stock assessments, per se, the ones who are actually doing the
47 calculations. The primary bottleneck is in the data processing,
48 and so what we're looking at in the Center is actually trying to

1 realign our activities and drop some activities.

2
3 There is things we do that maybe aren't as high priority as
4 others, and they're all high priority, and so it's not an easy
5 decision, but, basically, what we need to do is build up staff
6 in our data processing, our fisheries statistics processing,
7 and, in particular, also our otolith processing.

8
9 We are trying to invest in some new technology, near-infrared
10 spectroscopy, which holds the promise of being able to increase
11 our ageing by sevenfold, but it's still an untested -- Well, I
12 won't say untested. It's been tested for a few species, and
13 seems to work well, and so we're trying to work on that, and so
14 we're trying to take advantage of advanced technology and
15 reposition our resources so that we can have more people
16 processing the data.

17
18 As you know, in the Southeast, the data situation is the most
19 complicated in the nation, because we have more states and more
20 partners than anybody, and we have to stitch all these pieces
21 together, and so that's one of my major projects, is trying to
22 reposition resources. At the same time, we've been flat-funded
23 for a long time, and everything costs more every year, and so we
24 end up having fewer positions we can support, and so it is a big
25 challenge.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Kevin.

28
29 **MR. ANSON:** So a follow-up to that is what is your goal then for
30 the Science Center for getting assessments for the Gulf? I
31 mean, is it three, or is it four, or do you have a goal?

32
33 **DR. PORCH:** Ultimately, although it will take some time to
34 reposition resources, if you look at what our plan was for
35 revising SEDAR, which also includes us repositioning some
36 resources, we should be able to, I think, about double the
37 number of assessments, but we should be able to give management
38 advice even more often by using the interim analyses, and so we
39 started doing that with red grouper.

40
41 That way, we can give more like real-time updates for ABC
42 advice, rather than relying on projections that are several
43 years old, and so that would take advantage of our fishery-
44 independent surveys, at least for the species where we have good
45 fishery-independent surveys.

46
47 Ultimately, we hope to increase the frequency of giving ABC
48 advice a great deal, but I think, once we solve our data

1 processing issues and automate some things, we should be able to
2 double throughput, in terms of stock assessments. That means we
3 have to hire a couple more assessment staff, but mostly, again,
4 it's putting resources in the data processing.

5

6 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so I'm going to try to keep us
9 on schedule. We're scheduled to go to five o'clock, and I think
10 we've had some pretty good conversation, and I think, Ryan, you
11 were looking for two bits of information to come out of this,
12 and one of them had to do with whether or not we're okay with
13 the SEDAR schedule, and I didn't feel like there was a lot of
14 heartburn about that, and so I don't expect a lot of changes,
15 but we'll bring it back up at Full Council, and the other one
16 had to do with the MRIP-Lites and what to do with that, after we
17 hear some conversation in the Data Committee on Wednesday, and I
18 think we'll be prepared on Thursday to give you the
19 recommendation that you're looking for. Go ahead.

20

21 **MR. RINDONE:** I just would like everybody to continue to think,
22 into the future, 2021 and 2022, and what you guys foresee as
23 needing. Again, the further out that we can define what it is
24 that we're going to do, the better things can be scheduled in
25 advance and the more smoothly everything will ultimately run,
26 and so just be thinking about those. The years that seem far
27 off will be here before we know it.

28

29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you very much. Leann.

30

31 **MS. BOSARGE:** Don't forget about the terminal year on amberjack,
32 because we pushed that out further in the schedule so that we
33 could get more years under our belt with that larger minimum
34 size, and so I would hate to back the terminal year up and only
35 have two years under our belts, instead of three. We kind of
36 pushed it back for nothing at that point.

37

38 **MR. RINDONE:** I wrote it down.

39

40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so are there any more comments?
41 Any other business at this point? Seeing none, this will
42 conclude for the day the SEDAR Committee.

43

44 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 22, 2018.)

45

46

47

- - -