

Tab I, No. 4(b)

Overview of Revised SEDAR Process

Dr. Julie Neer (SEDAR) provided an overview of the forthcoming changes to the SEDAR stock assessment process. SEDAR was designed to provide an open, transparent process to conduct and review stock assessments for species in the southeast region. This process includes both peer-review and a thorough documentation of the methods and data used in an assessment. The process includes several types of assessments that vary in complexity and timeliness. Previously, these types were benchmark (most thorough), standard (most common), update (most timely), but have now been reorganized as research track, operational, and interim analysis. The research track assessment is open to new data sources, methods and modeling approaches. However, the resulting assessment does not produce management advice; rather, it is used as a framework for an operational assessment. The operational assessments fill the role of standard and update assessments in the previous paradigm. Operational assessments can typically be completed within 3-6 months and use the procedure defined in a research track assessment, but may include updated data streams. The operational assessment is expected to provide stock status and harvest advice similar to the previous standard and update assessments.

SEDAR is also working on a 'key stocks' planning tool which will help identify the primary stocks in a fishery, so that they can be regularly assessed on a defined schedule. Finally, the new approach will also have an interim analyses track that can be used to update core information and projections, and can be completed outside of the SEDAR process. The guidance for an interim analysis should be part of a research (or future operational) track assessment, and the product will be reviewed by the SSC.

The modified SEDAR framework will also affect the role of the SSC in the assessment process. Additional responsibility will be placed on the analysts, Council staff, and SSC to define terms of reference, assessment schedules, and lists of participants, and is based loosely on the Northeast Fisheries Science Center SAW/SARC approach. Dr. Neer stated the new process will be used to assess Gulf and South Atlantic Scamp (SEDAR 68), which will first be done as a research track assessment and be followed by an operational assessment. Operational assessments will be conducted for Gulf Gag and Greater Amberjack in 2020/21. The SSC noted that the revised SEDAR process will likely require further modification as the process is deployed and challenges are discovered. As such, the SSC requests that the SEDAR schedule be added as a recurring topic for future SSC meetings.

Council Staff Proposed Modifications to the SEDAR Process

Staff reviewed the proposed modifications to the SEDAR schedule as developed by Council staff in consultation with multiple SEDAR partners. Staff clarified that this request came directly from the Council in 2017, and the resulting recommendations were developed alongside, but not along with, the changes proposed by the research/operational track process proposed by the

SEFSC. The Council has already endorsed the research track/operational assessment process, and will see Scamp assessed using this new process. Some of the recommendations made by staff are already incorporated components of this new process, while others are not.

The SSC asked about the feasibility of an interdisciplinary team-style approach for the assessment workshop portion of the stock assessment process, whereby analysts and other experts could meet on an *ad hoc* basis to make decisions which would be reviewed later at a publicly noticed webinar. SEDAR staff clarified that this process is already in place; however, a large expansion of it could save considerable time during the assessment process by allowing decisions to be made more quickly, as opposed to having to wait for a publicly noticed webinar for clearance on every decision. The SSC thought that the proposed changes were reasonable, but pointed out that some may be more difficult to implement than others, especially those not already incorporated into the research track/operational assessment process.

Proposed Modifications to the SEDAR Process

Gulf Council SSC Meeting

August 2, 2018

Have annual call with SEFSC and decide which stocks to assess two years in advance.

- Positives:

- Better advance planning
- Better resource allocation
- Less scheduling uncertainty

- Negatives:

- Limits flexibility
- Increases time commitment
- Less reactionary capacity to issues

Determine assessment type, based on available data, two years prior to the year being discussed.

- Positives:

- Better advance planning
- Better resource allocation
- Less scheduling uncertainty

- Negatives:

- Limits flexibility
- Increases time commitment
- Less reactionary capacity to issues
- Fixes assessment type

Lock the SEDAR schedule two years in advance for both species and assessment type.

- Positives:

- Better advance planning
- Better resource allocation
- Less scheduling uncertainty
- Timely data compilation
- Logistical flexibility for meeting planning
- Eliminates time loss from last minute changes

- Negatives:

- Limits flexibility
- Less reactionary capacity to issues
- Fixes species to be assessed
- Fixes assessment type

Establish an annual data deadline for all data typically used in stock assessments.

- Positives:

- Better advance planning
- Timely data compilation
- Fewer missed deadlines

- Negatives:

- May result in some data missing deadline; being left out
- May result in unavailability of most recent year of data

RT: Make AW portion follow IPT approach.
Analysts and other experts can meet as needed.

- Positives:

- Free-flowing work environment
- Limits delays resulting from the current need to make decisions on a publicly noticed call or webinar
- Would maintain public record with rapporteurs

- Negatives:

- Loss of transparency present in the current assessment process

OA: Use IPT approach as much is as practical.
Analysts work with other experts as appropriate.

- Positives:

- Free-flowing work environment
- Limits delays resulting from the current need to make decisions on a publicly noticed call or webinar
- Would maintain public record with rapporteurs
- Fewer in-person meetings

- Negatives:

- Loss of transparency present in the current assessment process

Conduct an alternative, less data-intensive model run for every assessment.

- Positives:

- Acts as a physical check against the complexity inherent in SS3 assessments
- Likely to make fewer assumptions about data

- Negatives:

- Requires additional analytical time
- Necessary assumptions may be quite influential
- Won't be able to use all available data

Complete annual SAFE reports for species with completed stock assessments.

- Positives:

- Helps Councils respond to changes in various fisheries
- Decreases lag in rule-making from problem identification

- Negatives:

- Requires additional analytical time