

SEDAR Steering Committee Summary

September 24, 2018 webinar

The SEDAR Steering Committee (Committee) met via webinar on Monday September 24th. There were a few action items discussed related to the Gulf of Mexico.

3.3 Action Requests

As the new SEDAR process evolves, the Councils have been asked to consider a “scope of work” prior to finalizing terms of reference (TORs) for assessments on the 2020+ schedule. Council staff have already worked to develop a draft set of TORs for the first Operational Assessments of gag and greater amberjack, which will serve as the “scope of work.” These are scheduled to be reviewed by the SSC during the October 2018 meeting (item XIV) on the agenda.

Council staff requested that the draft TORs for the red snapper research track be sent to the Council as soon as possible to allow for approval by the spring (April/May 2019) SEDAR Steering Committee meeting. The SSC will be reviewing those in early 2019.

The Committee also asked the Council to consider clarifying future priorities for 2021 and beyond. Council staff and the Council chair will discuss the proposed 2021 schedule with the SSC and Council.

Finally, the Committee clarified that the terminal years for the cobia and vermilion snapper assessments scheduled for 2019 would be set at 2018. In the event this change creates a workload bottleneck for the SEFSC, the terminal year for vermilion snapper may be revised to 2017.

SEDAR Schedule Discussion – MRIP Calibration Updates

During the review of the 2018 schedule, a Committee member challenged the viability of the MRIP calibration updates on some species, specifically red snapper. The Gulf states have developed data collection programs that have been, or will soon be certified by NOAA Science and Technology. The state programs have a shared objective to increase accuracy and timeliness of fishery data but the programs vary widely in methodology and scope. The data collection programs in Alabama and Mississippi are exclusively for red snapper while the other state programs are multi-species efforts and it is unknown if these programs are directly comparable with one another. If the SEFSC moves forward with the MRIP calibrations for the Fishing Effort Survey for red snapper without also developing calibration protocols for each state program, the resultant data may not be comparable to the Gulf states data collection programs, which are the basis for catch monitoring. This problem came to light during a red snapper workshop meeting hosted by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission in September 2018.

The SEFSC needs to know immediately if the Council wants to proceed with the MRIP calibrations for gag, greater amberjack, gray snapper, vermilion snapper, and red snapper, or if the desire would be to hold off on these calibrations until a stock assessment can be completed on each species. The latter option would allow the data to be vetted in the stock assessment process, as opposed to reconciling the differing “currencies” in which the current data are being collected.