

**SEDAR Committee Report  
October 23, 2019  
Dr. Frazer – Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab I, No. 1**) as presented and approved the minutes (**Tab I, No. 2**) of the August 2019 meeting as written.

***Review of Gulf Stocks Suitable for Interim Analyses (Tab I, No. 4)***

Dr. Clay Porch provided a presentation on the interim analysis process. Full stock assessments can be a couple years out of date by the time the data are processed; whereas interim analyses, which are forecasts based on the most recent assessment, can be conducted annually using the previous year's data. An interim analysis relies on the previously accepted stock assessment for that species, an updated index of abundance or other data and provides an updated acceptable biological catch (ABC). An ABC from a reference year is adjusted by the ratio of the observed index value and the index value from a reference year to generate the new ABC. The use of a buffer and accounting for the uncertainty of the index can help smooth out annual variation in the index and improve catch forecasting.

Based on data availability, interim analyses could be conducted for red snapper, red grouper, vermilion snapper, gray snapper, gag, scamp, yellowedge grouper, and greater amberjack. Other species like gray triggerfish, king mackerel, and yellowtail snapper will need to be assessed before an interim analysis is attempted.

A Committee member asked about the approach when two or more surveys exist for a species. Dr. Porch replied that two surveys can be combined and weighted appropriately; however, consideration would need to be given to the time required to process the data from each index. Also, each index would need to be spatially representative of where the fish occur and where the fishery for that species is prosecuted.

***Summary of August 2019 SEDAR Steering Committee Webinar: NOAA's Recommended Use of the Current Gulf of Mexico Surveys of Marine Recreational Fishing in Stock Assessments (Tab I, No. 5)***

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) has undergone substantial modifications from the previous program. Also, the Gulf states have developed either supplemental (FL: Gulf Reef Fish Survey; AL: Snapper Check; MS: Tails and Scales) or standalone (LA: LA Creel; TX: TPWD Sport Angling Survey) surveys, which contribute catch advice for some (supplemental) or all (standalone) surveys. These surveys have been certified by MRIP, which simply means that the survey design is statistically sound (if key assumptions are met); certification is not an indication of the accuracy or precision of the estimates coming from those surveys.

Because the state surveys are not yet calibrated back in time, the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) current position is to move forward with stock assessments using MRIP until

the state calibrations are available. The SEDAR Steering Committee accepted the use of the new MRIP methodologies, but encouraged continued and timely development of the requisite calibrations for each of the states during its September 2019 webinar.

Dr. Luiz Barbieri reviewed the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) position on the evolution of the recreational data collection programs. The SSC recognizes the exclusive use of MRIP as an interim measure until the state surveys can be more readily integrated. Ultimately, the SSC recommended an in-person workshop to address the Fishing Effort Survey-calibrated MRIP data and conversions, and their calibration with state data collection programs, as they relate to the inclusion of the state surveys into future stock assessments.

The Committee's expectation is that the calibrations developed in 2020 will be available for use in 2021. A Committee member asked whether a calibration for a state survey was necessary, especially if the state's survey was certified as statistically sound and was producing timely and reliable estimates of catch and effort. Means exist to use a combined survey approach to use the data currently being collected by the states; however, it is also important to develop retrospective estimates of catch and effort for the years of data prior to a new survey's implementation. Integrating the surveys as they are is made somewhat more difficult due to differences in how each state survey collects data.

A Committee member expressed concern about the magnitude of the differences between the state and MRIP surveys. Dr. Barbieri added that addressing this issue is a priority of the SSC's proposed workshop.

***Review: Report to Congress Regarding Section 201 of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2018 (Tab I, No. 6)***

Dr. Richard Cody gave an overview of the cooperative data collection requirements from the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2018. The report to Congress discusses the types of data and analyses, inclusion of state and non-governmental sources of data, stock assessment process reviews, adherence and improvements to National Standard 2, and consideration of citizen science initiatives. NMFS has requested comments from the regional fishery management councils by the end of 2019.

Council staff have provided some recommendations, including clarifying that the state data collection surveys are not all presently incorporated into the stock assessment process in the Gulf. Further, a Committee member noted that the report is not actually facilitating improved incorporation of data and analyses from state and non-governmental sources. Also, it is uncommon that state surveys do not generate data which meet or exceed the requirements specified in this report to Congress. Lastly, the data used in the assessments should be representative of a species distribution in a region and be of sufficient temporal coverage to show contrast between years of data within that survey.

***Summary of September 2019 SEDAR Steering Committee Webinar (Tab I, No. 7)***

Dr. Simmons reviewed the SEDAR scheduling efforts by the SEDAR Steering Committee during its September 2019 webinar. Dr. Porch added that struggles in coordinating data receipt from the many data providers for an assessment needs to be addressed, and asked that the state representatives assist in considering solutions to this issue. The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, acting as a hub for the Gulf states, could assist in the management of data acquisition efforts.

***Review of Gulf of Mexico SEDAR Schedule (Tab I, No. 8)***

Council staff reviewed the SEDAR assessment schedule for Gulf species, adding that the SSC recommended adding Spanish mackerel and yellowedge grouper to the schedule, as these assessments are quite dated.

This concludes my report.