

## **Gulf SEDAR Committee Summary June 20, 2016 Kevin Anson, Chair**

### *SEDAR Steering Committee Review*

Staff reviewed the proceedings from the May 9, 2016 SEDAR Steering Committee webinar. The Steering Committee supported the Data Best Practices Panel recommendation for a multi-species stock ID and meristics workshop in 2017. When asked if yellowmouth grouper should be added to the proposed stock ID and meristics workshop to address species ID concerns, it was noted that it would be better to include yellowmouth grouper to the scamp research track assessment proposed for 2018.

The Steering Committee also supported a stock ID evaluation for gray snapper as part of the benchmark process since the literature indicates two distinct stocks exist in the Gulf of Mexico. Other supported future procedural workshops include Gulf of Mexico shrimp bycatch estimation and data limited method improvements/best practices.

The Council is asked to report to the Steering Committee in October 2016 on its progress in reviewing and applying the stock assessment prioritization tool. The Gulf Council's position is to request that the SEFSC draft the initial and weighting factors for consideration by the SSC. Though the Council is not required to use the tool exclusively to prioritize stock assessments, they are encouraged to justify deviating from the prioritization tool recommendations.

### *Research Track/Operational Track Assessment Approach*

The SSC received a presentation on the research track proposal at their June 2016 meeting. The process was viewed favorably by SSC members so long as it did not result in fewer assessments. The first test application of the research track approach is planned for the Gulf of Mexico-South Atlantic scamp assessment scheduled for 2018. The SSC indicated in their review of the proposal that they would be interested in seeing some set of best practices included in the standard operating procedures, prior to fully endorsing the change in assessment structure. The SEFSC indicated that the SSC would be instrumental in developing the standard practices for the proposed assessment methodology.

### *SEDAR Schedule*

Staff reviewed the SEDAR schedule with the Committee. It was noted that, in the SEDAR 49 Data Poor assessment, three species are unlikely to have enough data to produce stock assessments useful for management advice (Almaco jack, lesser amberjack, and wenchman). Committee members thought that more front-end work should be done ahead of these data-poor assessment efforts to ensure a higher probability of a useful assessment for candidate species,

and the SEFSC indicated that was an agreeable approach.

A Committee member recommended adding as many stocks as possible, in order of priority, to the list of proposed assessments each year. The goal of this effort would be to indicate to the region and to Congress the priorities of the Council, and the volume of assessments deemed necessary. This would make assessment scheduling an iterative process for the Council, since not all proposed species may be able to be assessed in a given year.

Staff reviewed the species selected by the Council, in order of priority, for MRIP Calibration Updates. These updates are for MRIP data *only* for the selected species. Staff noted that it is not required of the Council to conduct these data updates and, if the Council has other priorities, some of the proposed updates could be exchanged for another assessment (likely for a true update assessment). The Committee discussed moving gray triggerfish up in the schedule, noting it as a priority for the Council.

**The Committee recommends, and I so move, to move the gray triggerfish benchmark assessment to 2017 and to move gray snapper to 2018.**

*Motion carried with no opposition.*

The Committee also directed staff to provide a list of species with assessments at Full Council for consideration of the Committee's desire to establish a prioritized list for stock assessments to the Steering Committee. Lastly, the Committee made a motion with respect to data to be made available in the upcoming gray triggerfish assessment.

**The Committee recommends, and I so move, to draft a letter to the SEFSC requesting that the fall plankton (larval) survey samples from the U.S. Gulf of Mexico for calendar year 2008 forward be processed in time for the next gray triggerfish benchmark assessment scheduled in 2019.**

*Motion carried with no opposition.*

This concludes my report.