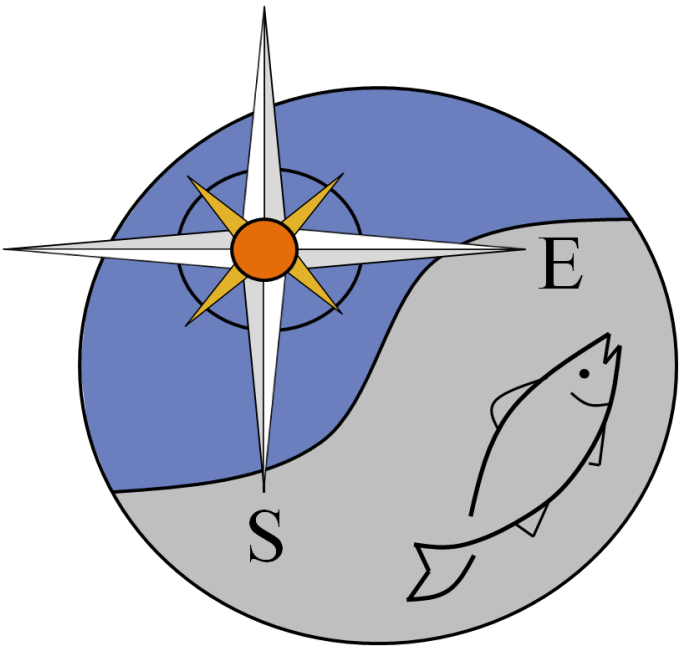
SEDAR



SEDAR Steering Committee

DRAFT Meeting Brief and Summary

October 1-2, 2013

Charleston, SC

SUMMARY OF STEERING COMMITTEE ACTIONS

This report provides both the briefing information provided for the meeting and the results of Steering Committee consideration of the agenda topics during the meeting. Details of the Steering Committee discussion and subsequent actions and recommendations on agenda topics are provided at the end of the overview discussion of each topic. In addition, specific recommendations and actions are repeated below in bullet form to provide a quick reference for the actions taken at this meeting.

- Due to the Federal government shut down, no committee members from NOAA fisheries were able to attend this meeting. The Committee agreed to discuss the agenda topics but withhold voting. Instead, members developed consensus statements for consideration by the full committee at the next available opportunity.
- Supported developing a new website and moving it to an outside host.
- Agreed that webinar participation is not practical for Data Workshops.
- Supported convening a Data Methods Workshop to develop data best practices guidelines for data workshops
- Agreed that assessment webinars, as currently conducted, are proving ineffective and inefficient at addressing assessment issues. Supported developing an IPT-like process for conducting assessments, that allows analysts to interact via email or conference call with technical and constituent appointees to develop the assessment model, and through which recommendations are reviewed through 2-3 webinars or a combination of webinars and meetings
- Recommended convening an Assessment Methods Workshop to develop best practices guidelines for assessments, in 2015 if funding is available.
- Supported additions to DW TORs addressing data uncertainties and obtaining reference documents addressing sampling programs and methods, to comply with revised NS2 guidelines.
- Suggested adding TORs or instructions to include information on sampling targets in the DW documentation.
- Agreed to reconsider the content and use of the Assessment Summary Report. Gulf Council representatives agreed to develop options and examples for consideration at the next meeting.
- Agreed that RW rapporteurs are no longer necessary.
- Supported providing clarification on public comment policies for SEDAR workshops.
- Supported obtaining the OMB COI form for all RW reviewers, per revised NS2 guidelines. Directed SEDAR Staff to pursue various logistical issues related to this new requirement.
- Recommended modifying the SEDAR guidelines to address desk reviews.

- Supported maintaining 3 assessment classifications, considering updates the default assessment type following initial benchmarks, and updates requiring less resources than benchmarks in planning.
- Supported allowing cooperators and lead assessment agencies to modify assessment plans, such as stocks to be assessed, without subsequent Steering Committee Action under limited circumstances and if specific criteria are met.
- Recommended that Cooperators include desired dissemination dates and terminal data years for requested assessments.
- Recommended that a representative of the FL FWCC assessment group be invited to join the Steering Committee.
- Supported the Gulf Council request to swap the timing of the red snapper and red grouper assessments.
- Supported the South Atlantic request to delay red snapper and replace red porgy with gray triggerfish in the SEDAR
- Supported HMS request to change the stocks assessed in the 2014 benchmark.
- Supported a dedicate Review Workshop for Atlantic menhaden in 2014.

Attendance

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Douglass Boyd, GMFMC
Patrick Campfield, ASMFC
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC
Carlos Farchette, CFMC
Doug Gregory, GMFMC
Ben Hartig, SAFMC
Bob Mahood, SAFMC
Miguel Rolon*, CFMC

SEDAR STAFF

Julia Byrd
John Carmichael
Julie Neer
Ryan Rindone

OBSERVERS

Russell Hudson
Gregg Waugh
Mike Errigo
Carrie Simmons
David Wyanski
Cathy Readinger*
Kathy Pereira*
Peter Barile*
Gracia Garcia-Moliner*

*indicates attendance via webinar

SEDAR Assessment Schedule, 2014-2016, including recommendations from this meeting.

YEAR	SAFMC/Commission (Beaufort)		GMFMC/CFMC (Miami)		HMS (SEFSC/PC)	FL FWC	Procedures
	SAFMC	Commissions	GMFMC	CFMC			
2014	1-3: Red snapper/gray trigger B, begin 8/14 4. Gag U	5. ATL menhaden (Review)	1, 2. King Mack B 3, 4. Red Snapper U 5.	6. Caribbean Data poor workshop 7. data poor assess stocks (tbd following workshop)	1, 2. Smoothhound, Atl & Gom, B	Black Grouper U Mutton U – early '14 Hogfish B – for review early '14	1. SA Shrimp Data Evaluation 2. Best Practices -Data
2015	1,-3: RS/GT (cont) 4-5. tilefish, vermilion, red grouper update 1,2: scamp/gray snapper B (begin)	ATL Red Drum (Review) By 0ct '15	1. Red grouper B 2. Vermilion B 3. Gray Trigger B 4. Scamp B 5. Red Snapper S	6. Queen conch 7. Spiny lobster	1. 2.	Yellowtail Snapper U	1. Best Practices - Assessment Methods
2016	1, 2: scamp/gray snapper B (cont) 3. Red porgy B 4. 5.	ATL Croaker	1. Gag U 2. GAJ U 3. Red drum B 4. Yellowedge Gr. S 5. Gray Snapper B	6. Grunts 6spp			

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Attachment 2. SEDAR Assessment Schedule
Attachment 3. SEDAR Productivity Review
Attachment 4. Federal Register Notice, NS2 Revisions
Attachment 5. Updated NS2 language with highlights
Attachment 6. 2014 Project Schedule

1. Introduction

1.1. Documents

Agenda
Attachment 1. February 25, 2013, Meeting Summary

1.2. Action

Introductions
Review and Approve Agenda
Approve February 2013 Meeting Summary

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

The Committee approved the agenda and February 2013 meeting summary.

Due to the Federal government shut down, no committee members from NOAA fisheries were able to attend this meeting, including Chair Bonnie Ponwith of SEFSC. Therefore, Doug Boyd was elected chair for the meeting.

The Committee agreed to discuss the agenda topics but withhold voting. Instead, members developed consensus statements for consideration by the full committee at the next available opportunity.

2. Activities Update

2.1. Documents

Attachment 2. SEDAR Assessment Schedule

2.2. 2012 Projects

2.2.1. SEDAR 28 Benchmark

Stocks: Gulf and South Atlantic Spanish mackerel and cobia

Coordinator: Ryan Rindone

Progress Summary: Completed. Atlantic stocks assessments were reviewed by the SAFMC SSC in April 2013. Following a desk review, Gulf stocks assessments were reviewed by the Gulf SSC in March 2013.

2.2.2. SEDAR 30 Benchmark

Stocks: Caribbean blue tang and queen triggerfish

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress Summary: Completed. Assessments were reviewed via CIE desk review in March 2013, and the final SARs were disseminated to the Council in April (queen triggerfish) and June (blue tang)

2.2.3. SEDAR 31 Benchmark

Stocks: Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper

Coordinator: Ryan Rindone

Progress Summary: Completed. The assessment was completed and reviewed by the Gulf SSC.

2.3. **2013 Projects**

2.3.1. SEDAR 32 SA Gray Triggerfish and Blueline Tilefish benchmark

Coordinator: Julia Byrd

Progress summary: Underway: The Data Workshop was held February 11-15 2013 in Charleston, SC, assessment webinars were held between May and July, and the RW for blueline tilefish was held in Morehead City, NC August 27-30, 2013. The blueline tilefish assessment will be available to the SSC in October and to the Council at its December 2013 meeting.

At its June 2013 meeting, the SAFMC approved the SEFSC request to modify the gray triggerfish schedule and review process. The timeline for gray triggerfish was extended, additional webinars were scheduled, and a CIE desk review was to be complete before the spring 2014 SSC meeting. In August 2013, an ageing issue was identified with gray triggerfish and the assessment halted indefinitely until the ageing issue is resolved. At the September 2013 SAFMC meeting, the SEFSC indicated that 50% to 100% of the structures must be re-read, and recommended continuing this assessment with SA red snapper (now SEDAR 41).

2.3.2. SEDAR 32A Gulf Menhaden Review

Coordinator: Julia Byrd

Progress summary: Underway. The SEDAR 32A Gulf Menhaden Review was held in conjunction with the SEDAR 32 RW, August 27 – 30, 2013 in Morehead City, NC. The final stock assessment report will be available to the Commission by the end of September 2013.

2.3.3. SEDAR 33 GMFMC Gag and Greater Amberjack Benchmark

Coordinator: Ryan Rindone

Progress summary: Underway. The Data Workshop was held May 20-24, 2013 in Tampa FL. The Assessment Workshop is being conducted through a series of webinars

from July through November 2013. The Review Workshop will be held February 24-27, 2014 in Miami, FL.

Due to delays in the receipt of recreational and commercial landings and discards data, it was necessary to reschedule the Review Workshop for both species from November 2013 to February 2014. This move provided for the least amount of logistical pain, and will allow sufficient time for analyses to be completed.

2.3.4. SEDAR 34 HMS Bonnethead and Atlantic sharpnose Standard

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Nearing completion The assessments are currently out for CIE desk review. The final SAR Reports are available, and reviewer reports should be available in October 2013.

2.4.5. SEDAR 35 CFMC Red Hind Benchmark

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Underway. The white grunt assessment was dropped from the project per agreement between the CFMC and the SEFSC, and agreed to by the Steering Committee via email since its last meeting. A Data Poor Methods workshop was to be held in place of the white grunt assessment. The data scoping call and date webinar for red hind have been held, and the DW is scheduled for Oct 9-11, 2013 in St. Thomas. . Assessment webinars are schedule to be held January-April 2014, with a Review workshop scheduled for May 13-15, 2014 in Miami, FL.

2.3.5. SEDAR 36 SAFMC Snowy Grouper Standard

Coordinator: Julia Byrd

Progress summary: Underway. A pre-data deadline webinar was held in June and assessment webinars were held between July and September 2013. The assessment will be available for SSC review in October 2013 and for the Council at its December 2013 meeting.

2.3.6. SEDAR 37 FL Hogfish Benchmark

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Underway. FL FWCC is the lead on this assessment. A Data scoping meeting is planned for October 2013 in Marathon Key. A series of webinars during December through February will be held to produce the assessment. A CIE desk review is requested in April of 2014.

The most recent report from FWC indicated this assessment was behind schedule, due to difficulties FWC encountered obtaining data from SEFSC. The data deadline for receipt of data was 12 August 2013.

2.3.7. SEDAR 38 King Mackerel Benchmark

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Underway. The Project schedule, Terms of Reference and Panel appointments are all approved and complete. Data workshop will be held in Charleston, SC December 9-13, 2013. The Assessment workshop will be held March 24-28, 2014 in Miami, and the Review Workshop will be held in August 13-15, 2014 in Miami.

2.3.8. SAFMC updates, Black Sea Bass

Coordinator: Julia Byrd

Progress summary: Complete. The update cleared review by the SAFMC SSC in April 2013.

2.4 2014 Projects

2.4.1. SEDAR 39 HMS Smoothhound Complexes (Requested)

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Planning. The original species planned for this SEDAR project were finetooth shark and smooth dogfish. Given recent genetic information indicating multiple species of smoothhound in the Gulf of Mexico, the SEFSC and HMS have requested that the finetooth assessment be postponed to ensure that enough personnel are available to conduct multiple smoothhound assessments, should that be the recommendation of the Data Workshop once the information is reviewed. The change in species is addressed under the Schedule topic.

General workshop schedule has been discussed: Data workshop will be held in Charleston, SC March 31-April 4, 2014. The Assessment webinars will be held in June-July 2014, and the Review Workshop will be held in September 2014.

2.4.2. SEDAR 40 Gulf of Mexico Red Grouper

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Planning. General workshop schedule has been discussed: Data workshop will be held June 2-6, 2014 (location TBD). The Assessment webinars will be held July-October, and the Review Workshop will be held in December 9-11, 2014 in Miami.

There has been some recent discussion regarding rescheduling this assessment (Gulf red grouper) to begin later in the year (December) to accommodate an earlier start date of the 2014 Gulf of Mexico red snapper update, currently slated to begin in December 2014. If

this change is approved by the SEDAR Steering Committee, the schedule for red grouper will need to be modified.

2.4.3. SEDAR 40A ASMFC Menhaden (Review Only)

Coordinator: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Planning. The SEDAR 40A Atlantic Menhaden Review will be held in conjunction with the SEDAR 40 RW, December 9-11, 2014 in Miami, FL.

If the SEDAR 40 red grouper project schedule is modified to accommodate a change in the Gulf of Mexico red snapper update schedule, then the Review of ASMFC Atlantic menhaden will need to be accommodated in some way other than the current plan.

2.4.4. SEDAR 41 South Atlantic Red Snapper and Red Porgy

Coordinator: Julia Byrd

Progress summary: Planning. General workshop schedule has been discussed: Data workshop is currently scheduled to be held August 4-8, 2014 in Charleston, SC. The Assessment webinars will be held October-January, and the Review Workshop was initially planned for March 2015. However, SEFSC recently requested providing additional time to complete the analysis, provided by delaying the RW until June 2015. This topic is discussed in detail under the schedule topic below.

2.4.5. South Atlantic Update – Gag Grouper

SEDAR Contact: Julia Byrd

Progress summary: Planning. Little discussion has occurred at this point regarding this update assessment, other than the data deadline of 10 February 2014 has been agreed to by the SEFSC during the 2014 SEDAR Project Scheduling call.

2.4.6. Gulf of Mexico Update – Red Snapper

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Planning. The data deadline of this update assessment was originally agreed to be 1 December 2014 by the SEFSC during the 2014 SEDAR Project Scheduling call.

Since that decision, the Gulf Council has indicated its desire to have the Update begin earlier in the year, so that it may be completed and available to the Council by spring 2015. This request impacts other 2014 SEDAR projects (particularly SEDAR 40 Gulf red grouper and the review of ASFMC Atlantic menhaden), so discussions regarding this change will be discussed during the Steering Committee meeting. The project schedule may change based on the results of that discussion.

2.4.6. Florida Black Grouper Update

SEDAR Contact: Julie Neer

Progress summary: Planning. Little discussion has occurred at this point regarding this update assessment, other than the data deadline of 22 September 2014 has been agreed to by the SEFSC during the 2014 SEDAR Project Scheduling call.

ACTION ITEMS SUMMARY

This topic is an update, no actions are required.

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

SEDAR SCHEDULE

FL FWC is conducting an update of mutton snapper. This project was inadvertently omitted from the above list. The assessment has fallen slightly behind, and will be available for Council review in early 2014 rather than Fall 2013 as originally planned.

FL FWC reported prior to the meeting that data access difficulties noted for hogfish were resolved and the assessment was moving ahead. A desk review of this benchmark assessment will likely be held in early Spring 2014.

Changes were made in the stocks and scheduling of projects listed above. These are detailed in the schedule action, Agenda Topic #4 below

Continuation of the federal government closure may impact many of the SEDAR projects listed above. The SEDAR 35 DW, planned for October 8-10, will most likely be cancelled and rescheduled. Other projects will be impacted as the closure lengthens.

3. SEDAR Procedural Recommendations

3.1. **Documents**

Attachment 3. SEDAR Productivity Review
Attachment 4. Federal Register Notice, NS2 Revisions
Attachment 5. Updated NS2 language with highlights

3.2. Overview

3.2.1. Assessment Process

A. Data Workshop

i. Difficulty completing data products on schedule

The biggest issue at data workshops is failure to compile datasets as scheduled. This sets the process behind from the beginning and assessments seldom catch back up. Recent issues with assessments missing their peer review workshops began early in the project with significant data delays, and with no extra time built into the process such outcomes are not surprising.

Reasons for delay include a lack of resources to compile data or complete processing on time, changes to project scheduling made after data compilation and processing is underway, discussion of non-germane topics during workshops, and revisiting common issues that have been previously resolved. SEDAR has no ability or means to force individuals working for state or federal agencies to meet deadlines, and no means of applying consequences for those unmet deadlines. Therefore, SEDAR must focus on ways of increasing efficiency. This is not a new problem for the Committee, so aspects of the recommendations that follow already carry Committee support from earlier meetings.

Staff Recommendations:

- Schedule a Data Methods Workshop to Develop Best Practices Guidelines, and appoint a Data Methods Working Group to participate in this and future workshops.

Many participants believe that Best Practices Guidelines addressing typical data issues and decisions will help reduce data delays. This concept was supported by the Steering Committee in March of 2011. No progress has been made because the Steering Committee did not support procedures workshops between 2010 and 2014. Convening Methods Working Groups to develop best practices was endorsed by the Committee at the May 2012 meeting.

The problems discussed since 2011 still exist, and are arguably only getting worse. For some appointees new to the process, the issues and questions may be new, but for those who have worked on many prior assessments, it is just a review. In a process that is severely limited by time and resources, effort spent readdressing an issue that has been considered numerous times prior is effort that is lost to addressing the new issues of a particular stock. Since many data challenges are the same from stock to stock, decisions and approaches for dealing with those challenges could be standardized. Doing so could give data providers the guidance they need to better prepare for workshops, and allow workshop participants to focus on

unique issues of the stock under consideration, and provide greater consistency in the treatment of common unknowns and uncertainties.

- Focus on data and data presentations required for the assessment

Because SEDAR currently provides one of the only reviewed and documented sources of information on landings and effort, there has been a tendency to burden the process with requests for comprehensive data summaries that are often not critical to the overall stock assessment. There is also a tendency during workshops for participants to request various tabulations just to "see how things look". Data Team leaders have cited the time and effort spent on such exercises as one reason why data completion often lags behind. Further, time spent on such exercises detracts from that available for data evaluation and validation.

ii. Workshop Participation via webinar or call

SEDAR staff have received request to provide support for participation in Data Workshops through webinars or conference call. Due to the nature of the Data Workshop process, structured primarily around numerous workgroups meeting simultaneously with plenaries scheduled as needed, the Steering Committee previously agreed that Data Workshop proceedings are not broadcast via webinar. Data providers who cannot attend are asked to be available 'on call' informally, through telephone or email for contact by individual participants at the workshop. SEDAR provides internet connectivity in the meeting spaces.

Because the Steering Committee has previously agreed that the DW process is not amenable to webinar broadcast, staff declined to set up a webinar or formal conference call as requested. Doing so would have set a precedent, created additional expense and added a number of logistical and transparency issues to consider. Dedicated phone lines, when available, can be expensive. Allowing participation via webinars is likely to quickly expand, with more and more workgroups and participants choosing that option to avoid travel. This would be a major burden on the technological capabilities of the meeting provider. Additionally, it will be difficult to adequately discuss issues with all participants, as those on the webinar are “not on the same footing” as those at the workshop.

Staff Recommendations

- Do not support DW participation via webinar

B. Assessment Workshop and Process

i. Difficulty obtaining timely and useful guidance through the Assessment Process

Analytical teams report difficulty effectively obtaining guidance through the Assessment Process. Although this problem is particularly acute with the transition to webinar assessment discussions, the prior workshop approach faced difficulties as well. One challenge is a lack of expertise outside of the SEFSC, which can be resolved neither quickly nor at this level. Another difficulty is simply the nature of the process, which is something that can be addressed here. The issue is that SEDAR has attempted, with varying levels of success, to force a dynamic process into a structured, linear framework of meetings and deadlines.

Developing complex analytical products such as stock assessments is challenging, and typically requires adaptability and flexibility to address many unforeseen issues. Within SEDAR, efforts to make the process open impose requirements such as FR notices of meetings and an expectation that every step will be conducted through a public forum. In fact, the process and its steps are laid out before the basic data are tabulated or the model structure is even identified. As a result there is no ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and late developing challenges, which, unfortunately, are the norm and not the exception in stock assessments. Rather than the pace of decisions being driven by model development or issues resolution, it is driven by a predetermined schedule of meetings. Sometimes key decisions line up well with the meeting schedule, and sometimes they do not.

The current response to this problem is basically a shotgun solution, based on scheduling many webinars, in hopes of reducing delays between issue identification and resolution. Downsides are as expected, including an unwillingness of technical experts such as SSC members to participate at all, a decline in overall participation on individual webinars due to fatigue and frustration, and a considerable time loss to analysts due to preparation for and participation in the webinars. It is difficult to compel participants to make time on their schedule for every webinar if many webinars lack critical discussion items, so as a result often the only participants are the agency analysts and a few members of the interested public. It is clear that the existing process is not well suited to collaborative work and changes should be considered.

The SEDAR process was set up in this manner as a way to provide openness and transparency to the assessment process. Currently, the program is in a three way tug of war, trying to balance the competing demands of "Timeliness, Transparency, and Throughput". Timeliness is not being well addressed, as it takes 10+ months to get the average assessment from the DW through the RW. One need only look at the list of unassessed stocks that are continually shuffled into the future when this Committee addresses scheduling each year to realize that Throughput is not where it needs to be. Transparency is well addressed, with SEDAR's expectation that every decision at every step of the process be addressed through a public forum creating arguably the most open and transparent assessment process in the Nation.

The question before the Committee is, how to increase timeliness and throughput without appreciably reducing transparency? One way to approach this is to consider how transparency is defined. The recent NS2 guidelines (addressed in

detail below) state: "A transparent process is one that ensures that background documents and reports from peer review are publicly available, subject to Magnuson-Stevens Act confidentiality requirements, and allows the public full and open access to peer review panel meetings." Moreover, the agency recognized the difficulty and inefficiency in providing for public comment during all stages of analytical work when making modifications to the public comment provisions in NS2 (Attachment 4), as summarized here:

> 'In paragraph (a)(6)(iv), the statement: "Subject to the Magnuson-Stevens Act confidentiality requirements, the public should have access to each stage in the development of scientific information, from data collection, to analytical modeling, to decision making'' was removed because it is impracticable to solicit public comment during all the stages of development of the science, such as data sampling operations and analytical work. Further revision was made to clarify public comment should be solicited during the ''review'' of scientific information rather than during the ''development'' of science.'

This passage indicates that the NS2 guidelines addressing public comment shift the focus for comment to the review stage, as a practical way of dealing with an impractical situation. Further, the change in language is justified on the basis of unique aspects of analytical work (which will include stock assessments). The language addressing transparency states that transparency is achieved when complete documentation is publicly available. Therefore, this guidance suggests that modifying the AW process, particularly to reduce the expectation that each and every assessment decision is made in a public meeting forum with public comment, is within the NS2 guidelines.

Staff Recommendations:

- Modify the Assessment process to allow informal panel discussions between the analytical team, assessment panel and an advisory panel, and reduce the number of scheduled assessment webinars.

The current Council and SERO 'IPT' approach, used to develop complex FMPs, amendments and the supporting analyses necessary for Councils to evaluate management alternatives, is offered as a model on which to build a new AW process. Under this proposal, the SEDAR -Assessment panel is considered analogous to an IPT, and the lead analysts will be able to pose questions and issues to the assessment panel for advice and resolution on an as needed basis. The assessment panel itself can be composed of the same types of technical experts as current panels. A stakeholder Advisory Panel will also be created, similar to the appointed observers in the current approach, which will be available to the analytical team to provide insight and guidance on fishery-related issues. The primary change is that, rather than holding all discussion on pre-scheduled webinars, the analysts will be allowed to interact with the technical and advisory panels as issues arise, using the most appropriate forms of communication for the parties involved.

In addition to the ongoing informal interaction between the analytical team, assessment panel, and advisory panel, public webinars will be held at designated points during model development to discuss findings and gather input. Examples include once the continuity run is complete and when the base run or base candidates are functional. This actually provides a more open process than that required in NS2, which allows public comment opportunities to be delayed until the review stage.

This suggestion takes advantage of the flexibility Council IPTs are allowed to meet informally and as necessary to develop and evaluate analyses and FMP language without a requirement that every IPT meeting be public and noticed. Importantly, this allows IPT meetings to occur as needed, dictated by the flow of work on the project. Providing such flexibility to the highly complex and technical assessment development process of the SEDAR AW should increase SEDAR AW efficiency. The work of the IPT is driven by guidance provided by the Council; the work of the SEDAR AW panel is driven by Terms of Reference that are approved by the Council. The results of IPT efforts are regularly reviewed and acted upon in a public forum - the Council meeting. The results of the SEDAR AW panel can be reviewed through webinars, during development at key points, such as when the continuity model and base run models are complete. Essentially this means that the assessment process will include two public meeting webinars where actual results are available and discussed. One will be held early in the process, to discuss the continuity run and likely structure of the base run, and the second shortly before the RW to discuss the base run, sensitivities, and uncertainties. Furthermore, all findings and decisions are also subject to the robust, public independent peer review which concludes SEDARs involvement, at the SSC or other technical body meetings where recommendations are developed for managers, and at many points during consideration of management alternatives.

Table 1. Comparison of key characteristics of the existing and proposed Assessment Workshop Process.

Trait	IPT	Existing AW Process	Revised AW process
Technical Membership	Council and agency staff and scientists	Agency analysts, SSC representatives, other appointed scientists	Agency analysts, SSC representatives, other appointed scientists
Advisory Membership	none	Fishery appointed observers to the AW	Fishery appointed observers to the AW
Meeting Approach	Informal, as needed, primarily through conference calls and email exchange	Formal, public, planned up to 12 months in advance and noticed in the FR.	Informal, as needed, primarily through conference calls and email exchange
Minimum time	none	4 weeks	none

period required to schedule a meeting			
Charge provided by	Council guidance on options and alternatives	Council approved Terms of Reference	Council approved Terms of Reference
Public availability of documents	Council briefing materials	Presentations throughout the process. Model results at the conclusion; report available for RW, following panel approval	At selected points during Model development: 1. Review continuity run and model structure of base run 2. Review functioning base run and discuss uncertainties 3. When available for RW consideration

ii. Assessments are not completed on schedule

As discussed regarding the Data Workshop, many of the decisions faced by Assessment Workshop panels occur repeatedly from assessment to assessment, and revisiting issues anew with each project is a time drain that creates inefficiency and sometimes inconsistency in decisions. The redundancy hampers progress on issues of importance to a particular assessment, and, since each AW panel is a unique group of individuals, it contributes to inconsistencies in decision making. The suggested solution is the same as that for the DW, and has been supported by the Committee during earlier meetings: Develop a set of best practices guidelines for dealing with common and typical issues. This is believed the best way to increase efficiency and ensure appropriate consistency.

Staff Recommendations:

- Hold an Assessment Methods Workshop to Develop Best Practices Guidelines, and convene an Assessment Methods Working Group to participate in this and future workshops.

For reasons similar to those stated above regarding Data Best Practices, Assessment Methods Best Practices Guidelines are desired to add efficiency and consistency to the Process. The only impediment to moving ahead on this item is approval from the Steering Committee to hold another SEDAR procedures workshop.

C. Review Workshop Process

i. Rapporteurs

The current SEDAR Guidelines require that the lead assessment agency provide a rapporteur for the Review Workshop, responsible for keeping notes on the proceedings and providing support to the reviewers. When this was approved, reviewers expected such support, but now reviewers increasingly prefer to take their own notes. An additional yet important change is the reduction in travel budgets for agencies, making it difficult to justify the additional attendee at the workshops.

Staff Recommendations:

- Remove the RW Rapporteur requirement

ii. Assessment Summary Report

The current SEDAR Assessment Report Outline includes an assessment summary in the introductory section, prepared by the SEDAR Coordinators in consultation with the lead analysts, that focuses on results of status determinations and stock projections. Originally intended to summarize assessment results for a non-technical audience, completion of the summary is becoming increasingly difficult and of questionable value. One reason is that assessments now focus more on uncertainties and providing multiple "states of nature" for consideration by technical bodies (SSC's) in developing fishing level recommendations. Another is that Reviewers, at both workshop panels and especially for recent desk reviewers, do not always reach unanimous conclusions, thus there is no single assessment run on which to develop summary results. Finally, with the emphasis placed upon SSC recommendations through revisions to the MSA, there seems less dependence on, and need for, the SEDAR assessment summary as the primary source of status recommendations, particularly for the non-technical audience. Such audiences will be better served by summaries prepared through Cooperator technical procedures that reflect the actual recommendations managers will act upon.

Staff Recommendations:

- Remove the Assessment Summary Report requirement from the outline.

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

Data Workshop

The Steering Committee supported convening a Data Methods Workshop to develop data best practices guidelines for data workshops, in 2014 if funding is available. An organizing committee composed of SEDAR staff and a staff person or technical representative from each cooperator will develop objectives and TORs. Participants will include representation by cooperator technical

groups (SSC and technical Committee), primary data programs, and assessment groups. A workshop proposal will be developed and distributed to the Committee for consideration.

The Committee agreed that webinar participation is not practical for Data Workshops.

Assessment Process

The Steering Committee agreed that assessment webinars, as currently conducted, are proving ineffective and inefficient at addressing assessment issues. More importantly, the multi-webinar process is burdensome to participants, intimidating to constituents and is not meeting the SEDAR objective of increased participation in the process. Therefore the Committee supported the recommendation of developing an IPT-like process for conducting assessments, that allows analysts to interact via email or conference call with technical and constituent appointees to develop the assessment model, and through which recommendations are reviewed through 2-3 webinars or a combination of webinars and meetings. Key points to consider in the modifications are: maintaining transparency, providing timely access to documentation including working papers, and ensuring thorough justification is provided for assessment decisions. Although Committee members presented supported modifying the process as described, it is not clear at this time whether an IPT-stlye approach can be accommodated within the SEDAR process, due to SEDAR workshop panels being classified as Council Advisory Panels. Legal guidance and clarification will be requested.

The Committee recommended convening an Assessment Methods Workshop to develop best practices guidelines for assessments, in 2015 if funding is available. An organizing committee composed of SEDAR staff and a staff person or technical representative from each cooperator will develop objectives and TORs. Participants will include representation by cooperator technical groups (SSC and technical Committee), lead assessment teams, and invited experts in stock assessments. Suggested topics include comparing and contrasting commonly used assessment models and packages, development and presentation of outputs, the trade-offs between consistency and continuity and innovation and advancement.

Review Workshop

The Steering Committee agreed that the content and use of the summary report should be evaluated. A major concern is difficulty in

finding key information within existing reports. Whether this is best resolved by modifying the summary or assessment report outlines is undetermined. It was suggested that the summary should provide an "Executive Summary" of the assessment report, but not clear what content should be included and how it should be presented. Gulf Council representatives will develop options and examples for consideration at the next meeting.

The Committee agreed that RW rapporteurs are no longer necessary. Audio files can be provided at the end of each day to the reviewers, if desired.

3.2.2. Review of National Standard 2 guidelines

NMFS recently published the final revised National Standard 2 guidelines. Because peer reviews are addressed in NS2 the Committee is asked to review the guidelines and consider if any changes are needed in the SEDAR process to comply with the guidelines.

The full Federal Register Notice publication addressing the changes is provided for reference (Attachment 4). Also provided is excerpted text stating the revised language (Attachment 5), with a few sections highlighted that address points the Committee is asked to consider. NMFS indicated that changes to NS2 are intended to provide clarification on:

- What constitutes best scientific information available (BSIA) for fishery conservation and management measures;
- Standards for scientific peer review;
- Role of the regional fishery management councils' Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSCs) in the review of scientific information;
- Content and purpose of the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report and related documents.

NS2 Item 1. Transparency Provisions

SECTION: (a)(6)(iv) ***Transparency and Openness***
sub-Section (A) (Page 2)

Section (a) addresses best scientific information available. It states "Public comment should be solicited at appropriate times during the review of scientific information". This change is described as follows:

"Subject to the Magnuson-Stevens Act confidentiality requirements, the public should have access to each stage in the development of scientific information, from data collection, to analytical modeling, to decision making" was removed because it is impracticable to solicit public comment during all the stages of

development of the science, such as data sampling operations and analytical work. Further revision was made to clarify public comment should be solicited during the "review" of scientific information rather than during the "development" of science. "

SEDAR allows informal public comment during the Data Workshop and Assessment Process. SEDAR has a formal process for submission of written comment throughout assessment development and review, through dedicated email addresses for each project. Comments received are documented in a working paper, made available to all participants and become part of the administrative record of the process. No public comment is specified during the review workshop, but written comments are taken as with all other phases of the project. In addition, each partner has public comment opportunities during its technical review of the SEDAR products, which allows for public comment during the development of recommendations and actions that may result from SEDAR assessment findings.

The Committee is asked to consider if the SEDAR public comment process addresses the NS2 requirements. Particularly, whether some changes should be made to shift comment opportunities on the SEDAR assessments toward the review phase as noted in the language justifying the change in NS2 guidelines.

Staff Recommendations:

- Include notice on RW agendas and FRNs indicating that written public comment will be accepted.
- Establish a deadline of one week prior to the review for submission of comments regarding the assessments under review, to allow distribution to the RW panel. This deadline will be modified if the Assessment W report is not available as scheduled, two weeks prior to the RW.
- Allow additional written comments to be submitted during the RW, until the close of the meeting on the next to last day of the workshop.
- Continue the current practice of accepting written comment, submitted through dedicated email addresses, throughout the DW and AW phases.
- Continue the current practice of directing post-RW comment to the appropriate Cooperator.

sub-Section (B) (Page 2) (of (a)(6)(iv) *Transparency and Openness)*

This section also addresses the content of scientific products:

"(B) Scientific information products should describe data collection methods, report sources of uncertainty or statistical error, and acknowledge other data limitations. Such products should explain any decisions to exclude data from analysis. Scientific products should identify major assumptions and

uncertainties of analytical models. Finally, such products should openly acknowledge gaps in scientific information."

SEDAR assessment documentation addresses much of the requested information and the requirements to do so are specified in the Terms of Reference. A highlighted item from this section for discussion is the first statement; "...describe data collection methods....". SEDAR documentation typically does not include a complete and basic description of the methods used to collect all the various data components that are included in an assessment. Similarly, "sources of uncertainty or statistical error" and "acknowledgement of other data limitations" is not consistently addressed across the various data sources. Due to a rigorous set of evaluation criteria, indices workgroups at DWs usually address data limitations and uncertainties such as spatial or temporal coverage explicitly. Such evaluations are less often found in discussion of catch statistics, perhaps because it is assumed that most participants are familiar with the programs and their limitations.

Staff Recommendations:

- Request documentation of sampling programs and data collection methods be included in the SEDAR reference documents or working papers.
- Each data provider should submit current documentation of their program as part of the data compilation for each assessment project.
- Add Terms of Reference to all DW workgroups to ensure that data limitations and sources of uncertainty and error are acknowledged and addressed in the report for each data source.

NS Item 2: Peer Review Process

Section: (b)(2)(ii) ***Conflict of Interest***

This section (b) addresses the peer review process. Peer reviewers must comply with federal conflict of interest and ethics requirements. Peer reviewers of SEDAR assessments are provided through the CIE and appointed by the Cooperators. Screening for COI and determination of independence of CIE reviewers is under the purview of the CIE; SEDAR requests reviewers but has no role in their selection. Agency staff contacts to the CIE indicate that the CIE selection and reviewing process meets NS2 standards for COI and independence.

The NS2 language states:

"Potential reviewers who are not federal employees must be screened for conflicts of interest in accordance with the NOAA Policy on Conflicts of Interest

for Peer Review Subject to OMB's Peer Review Bulletin or other applicable rules or guidelines."

Reviewers appointed by the Councils are typically SSC members, who are required to file financial disclosures. Financial disclosures will not be on file for the non-SSC reviewers who may also be appointed by the Councils and by other Cooperators. In addition, there is an OMB COI form that is not part of the standard SSC member disclosures and addresses broader issues than the financial disclosure. NMFS/SERO legal Counsel was asked about this requirement in NS2, and suggested that all reviewers should complete the OMB COI form.

Staff Recommendations:

- Require that all reviewers appointed by Cooperators complete the OMB COI form.

NS2 Item 3

Section: (b)(3) *Transparency*

The new guidelines provide a definition of transparency with regard to peer reviews and scientific evaluation:

"A transparent process is one that ensures that background documents and reports from peer review are publicly available, subject to Magnuson-Stevens Act confidentiality requirements, and allows the public full and open access to peer review panel meetings."

This definition is helpful, since the Steering Committee has discussed the meaning of transparency in the context of assessment development. By ensuring public availability of thorough documentation and conducting open review panel meetings, SEDAR is complying with the transparency standard.

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

National Standard #2 Compliance

The Steering Committee supported the recommended process changes to the RW that clarify public comment policies.

The Steering Committee supported the recommended additions to DW TORs addressing data uncertainties and obtaining reference documents addressing sampling programs and methods. Including information on sampling targets was requested.

The Committee acknowledged the need to obtain the OMB COI form for all RW reviewers. Logistical concerns remain to be addressed, including questions of what happens to the forms once completed; are applicants subject to some type of review and determination, and if so, by who; for how long are forms valid; and how far in advance of a RW must forms be submitted. Staff was directed to request clarification from legal counsel on these topics.

E. Desk Review Process

The SEDAR guidelines state that Peer Reviews will be conducted through in-person workshops. However, several recent assessments were not prepared in time to be considered during their scheduled Review Workshop so the Committee agreed to conduct the peer review through written desk reviews. Desk reviews follow the same TOR process as workshop reviews, and typically include three reviewers appointed through the CIE. Besides the lack of a workshop, the primary difference is that the desk reviewers do not prepare a Review Workshop Summary report that summarizes the opinions of all reviewers on the assessment. Instead, the product is individual reviewer reports. Additionally, no non-CIE Reviewers (e.g. SSC members) participate as desk reviewers.

SEDAR guidelines were last revised before any desk reviews were considered for SEDAR assessments. The Committee is asked to consider revising the guidelines to address desk reviews.

Staff Recommendations:

- Develop guidelines addressing desk reviews.
- Topics to consider:
  - Handling Reviewer reports
    - Reviewer reports will be included in the SEDAR AR, treated similar to RW reports.
    - Reviewer reports will be included as the RW section of the SEDAR assessment report.
  - Role of SSCs (and other technical bodies) in addressing reviewer comments
    - Each Cooperator ~~should be allowed to~~ *shall* develop a process for addressing reviewer comments.
  - Resolving potential differences of opinion amongst reviewers
    - Each Cooperator ~~should~~ *shall* develop guidelines to assist its technical bodies in resolving differences of opinion.
  - Circumstances under which desk reviews are considered
    - ~~The Steering Committee should determine when desk reviews are acceptable. Stocks receiving desk reviews can be identified during SEDAR project scheduling.~~

- *Review workshops are the preferred approach. Desk reviews are a 'last resort', to be used to address projects that are delayed, as a means to prevent further delay in assessment completion.*
- ~~The appropriate Cooperator and Steering Committee Chair shall have authority to approve desk reviews for projects that fail to meet RW deadlines.~~
- *The appropriate Cooperator, assessment agency representative, Steering Committee Chair and SEDAR Program Manager shall consult to determine if a desk review is necessary.*

o Consideration to whether desk reviews for Benchmark assessment will continue to meet current IQA Peer Review guidelines.

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

SEDAR DESK REVIEWS

The Steering Committee recommended that the SEDAR guidelines be modified to address desk reviews, and supported the recommended process described above, with the modifications indicated by italicized text and strikethrough.

3.2.3. ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

The Committee has discussed assessment classifications several times since the three categories were implemented in early 2011. In October 2012 the Committee asked to revisit this issue at the next in-person meeting.

Some believe that three categories are overly complex with overlapping descriptions. Others believe far too many benchmark assessments are held, and greater use should be made of updates.

Three categories were developed to manage the overall workload. Strict update assessments were defined in an effort to streamline completion and review of assessment updates that are based on adding new data points to existing time series. These are conducted by the analytical team, with no SEDAR meetings or workshops or panels, and reviewed by the SSC or other cooperator panel. Benchmark assessments are intended for first time consideration of stocks and major data additions to existing stocks. Falling between these two are Standard assessments, which allow more flexibility than updates, and are conducted with a simpler process than benchmarks with limited workshops. They do include an assessment panel and are reviewed by the SSC.

The table below (Table 1) is based on the original descriptions from the March 2011 meeting summary, and modified to reflect current practices and note the public comment opportunities of each type.

A primary reason for the creation of Standard assessments was an unwillingness to allow major assessment changes, such as addition of new data sets or consideration of new model packages, without any type of involvement by the SSC and scientists outside of the analytical team, and with no opportunity for any public access to the process until a final product was available for SSC review. The Steering Committee was willing to allow a simplified process for strict updates that only add new years of data.

Productivity increases were expected to come from increased use of Standard and Update assessments, on the basis of an Update or Standard taking fewer resources than a Benchmark. In initial discussions, for example, it was suggested that a single assessment slot could be used for a single Benchmark or two Updates during a particular year. While some early scheduling efforts attempted this, it has never happened in practice. During scheduling, slots are routinely allocated for a single item, whether it be a Benchmark or an Update. As a result of this scheduling practice, Cooperators have no incentive to choose an Update or Standard over a Benchmark, as they will not receive any more assessed stocks either way. Staff believes that this is a primary reason Benchmarks continue to dominate, even for stocks that have been assessed multiple times. Since Standard and Update assessments that provide unfavorable results are somewhat more open to criticism for perceived issues that are not addressed (but possibly would be considered in a benchmark project), or for the use of the less vigorous process with less public involvement, these assessment categories pose greater risk to the Cooperator.

In practice, Benchmark assessments are still used far more often than Updates and Standards, as shown in Figure 1

Staff Recommendations:

- Maintain the 3 categories as described.
- Maintain the current guidance that updates should be the default assessment type following initial benchmarks.
- Consider treating updates as only requiring ½ of a slot in the planning worksheet.

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES

The Steering Committee supported the recommendations. Concerns were expressed with the inability of the SEDAR program to meet the full assessment needs of the Cooperators, primarily due to resource constraints of the SEFSC. Members remain optimistic that productivity will increase in the future through greater reliance upon updates, particularly if the number of updates completed per year and slot can increase as suggested. There is also interest in pursuing other sources, such as contracted assessment preparers or use of Council staff in preparing assessment updates.

3.2.4. Role of the Steering Committee in Assessment Scheduling

Under current practices, the Steering Committee is responsible for approving the SEDAR project schedule that determines when and which stocks are assessed. However, in recent years the committee has struggled with long term planning as the Cooperators respond to developing management issues. In some instances the Steering Committee has hastily convened to approve schedule changes that only impacted one Cooperator and were supported by that Cooperator and the other agencies involved.

The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to retain final approval for assessment projects, or whether it desires to delegate more authority to the Cooperators and agency leadership. For example, the Committee could allow some latitude for a cooperator and lead assessment agency to modify the particular stocks to be assessed, as has been done several times recently, if both parties agree and no other cooperators are affected, without requiring full Steering Committee review and approval. To ensure adequate documentation of scheduled projects, notification to the committee, in writing and through the Program Manager, could be required of the partner initiating changes.

Staff Recommendations:

- Allow cooperators and lead assessment agencies to modify assessment plans, such as stocks to be assessed, without subsequent Steering Committee Action under limited circumstances and if specific criteria are met, as described below.
  - The change does not affect assessments for other cooperators.
  - The Steering Committee is notified in writing of the change, by memo from the Cooperator requesting the change.
  - The Steering Committee may approve a framework or set of alternatives to be decided by the appropriate cooperator and assessment agency.

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

SCHEDULING PROCESS

The Steering Committee supported the recommendations allowing greater flexibility for Cooperators and the Chair to address late developing schedule issues.

3.3. **Actions**

Specific action items are listed with each discussion topic.

Table 2. Summary of the 3 SEDAR assessment types.

Type	Workshops	Review	Public Comment	Flexibility	Timing
Benchmark	2 + AW webinar process	Independent Panel	Throughout	Full	Flexible
Standard	1, optional multiple webinars	SSC	During Webinars and SSC review	• New data points • New series if compatible with benchmark model and supported by some type of review (such as use in prior SEDAR) • New model package if same category as benchmark • Modify configuration and assumptions in response to new information	within 1 year of terminal data year
Update	None	SSC	During SSC review	Updated data only	within 1 year of terminal data year

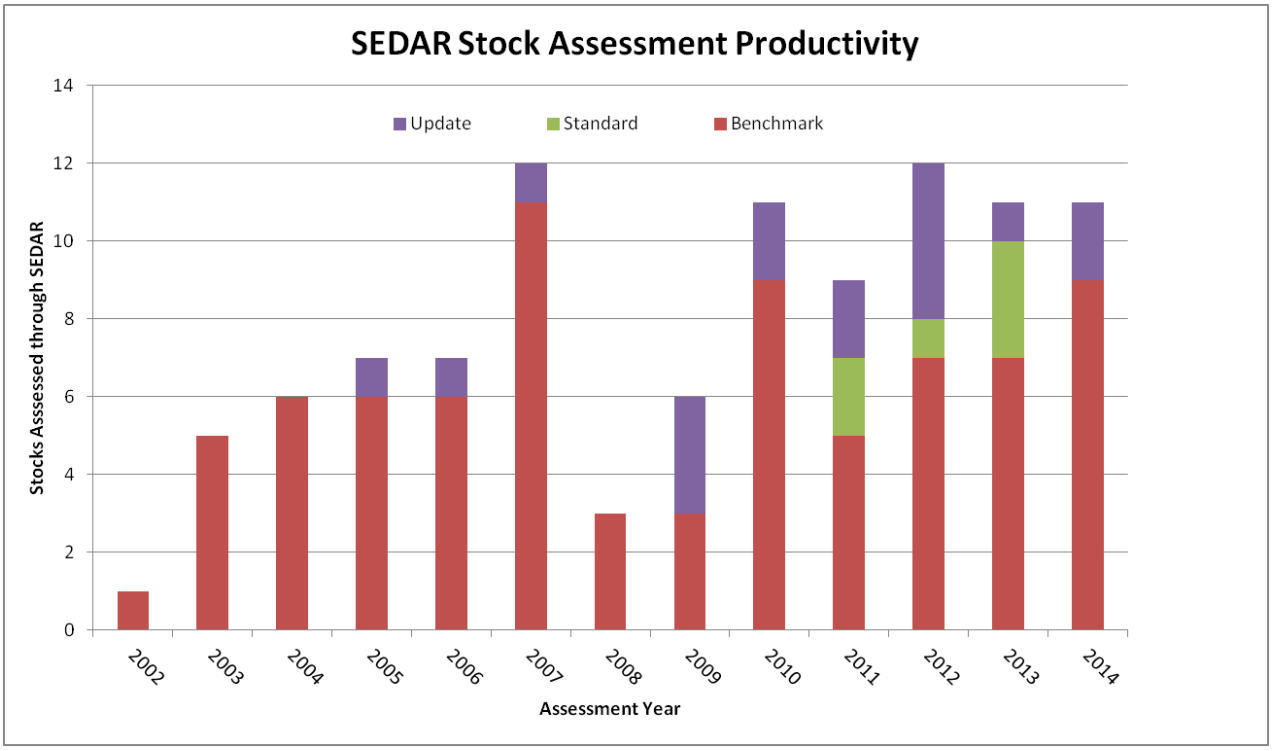

Figure 1. Annual SEDAR productivity by assessment type, 2002-2014.

4. SEDAR Assessment Schedule

4.1. Documents

Attachment 6. 2014 Project Schedule

4.2. Overview

The Committee is asked to develop a work plan for 2015 and identify long term priorities for 2016 and beyond. There is a request from the Gulf Council to swap the timing of the red grouper Benchmark and red snapper Update in 2014. There is also a request by HMS to drop finetooth shark from the 2014 schedule in order to accommodate multiple smoothhound complex assessments.

A review of productivity between 2002 and 2014 is provided as Attachment 2. Productivity has increased, reaching 11 stocks per year recently. Based on Table 3, however, planned productivity is on the order of 15 stocks per year when the available number of assessment analyst positions is considered. One reason for the discrepancy is complex stocks such as red snapper and king mackerel which require multiple 'slots' in the planning process. Another is that personnel issues have reduced the number of available slots in recent years.

4.3. ACTIONS

ACTION: GMFMC request to switch the timing of red grouper and red snapper in 2014.

The GMFMC requests that red grouper (SEDAR 40 Benchmark) and red snapper (Update) swap timing, to allow red snapper to be completed earlier. This must be considered by the Steering Committee because it impacts another cooperator, the ASMFC, because the review of Atlantic Menhaden is scheduled to occur with SEDAR 40 and the change will delay the SEDAR 40 RW.

There are several aspects related to data and scheduling to consider. Staff has worked over the last several weeks to evaluate feasibility of this change.

1) Can 2013 red snapper data be available by mid-2014 (proposed late August data deadline)?

SEFSC staff in the data, life history, and indices groups were contacted, and indicated that red snapper data can be available for mid-2014. Availability of recreational and commercial landings and discards data from states have been received later than typical in recent years, and timely submittal of these data by the July 1 deadline is critical to a late August 2014 data deadline.

2) The SEDAR 40 data deadline was mid-May. Will dropping that, and shifting red snapper to August impact preparation for other projects?

SEFSC staff in the data group indicated this change in deadlines is feasible. A data deadline of November or December 2014 was proposed by the data group, but no formal date has been recommended; that will be determined if this change is adopted by the Committee.

3) What are the impacts to Atlantic Menhaden?

Project planning is well underway for Atlantic menhaden, with expectation of a review held in December 2014, during the SEDAR 40 RW. Delaying SEDAR 40 (red grouper) will impact this plan. As there are no other scheduled RWs around that time, the options are to 1) request that ASMFC consent to a delay in menhaden, or 2) convene a dedicated RW for menhaden to meet this obligation. SEDAR staff has consulted with ASMFC staff and the assessment analysts, and determined that option 1 is not desired. Therefore, the Committee is asked to support an additional 2014 RW devoted to Atlantic menhaden.

SUMMARY:

- **Conduct Gulf red snapper update, completed by December 2014.**
- **Begin Gulf red grouper in December 2014.**
- **Add a dedicated Review Workshop for Atlantic Menhaden.**
- **Renumber SEDAR projects accordingly.**

ACTION: HMS request to drop the scheduled finetooth shark assessment schedule for 2014 in favor of conducting two smoothhound complex assessments (one for the Atlantic and one for the Gulf of Mexico

ACTION: SEFSC request to provide additional analytical time for the Atlantic red snapper benchmark, by delaying the review workshop until June 2015. Supported by the SAFMC.

Initial project planning for 2014 called for Atlantic red snapper and red porgy to begin with a DW in August 2014 and a RW in March 2015. This timing provides the assessment to the SAFMC SSC for review in April 2015, enabling the Council to consider recommendations in June 2015.

The Center requests additional time to complete the analyses of red snapper. Since the new fishery independent survey data provided by SEFIS will not be available for 2013 until mid-2014, it is not possible to start the project earlier in 2013 to provide the additional time requested.

ACTION: SEFSC request to include gray triggerfish with red snapper, and to delay red porgy until 2016.

As noted above in the project summaries, gray triggerfish dropped from SEDAR 32 due to ageing issues. The Center recommends that it be included with red snapper in the next benchmark cycle, and that red porgy be delayed. A benefit to both gray triggerfish and red porgy to this change is that new survey data provided by SEFIS can be considered.

ACTION: Approve assessment projects for 2015.

Table 3 provides the requested assessment priorities of each Cooperator, based on prior Steering Committee discussions and information provided to SEDAR staff in preparation for this meeting.

ACTION: Consider Procedure Workshops for 2014 and 2015.

Table 3 includes procedure workshops suggested for 2014 and 2015 to implement recommendations from the procedures discussion of Section 3. Table 4 is a revision scenario, that includes the changes requested by the Councils and discussed in this section.

ACTION: Determine assessment resources available for 2016 and identify priority stocks.

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

SEDAR SCHEDULE

The Steering Committee supported the requested schedule changes listed above: gulf red grouper/red snapper timing change, including a dedicated RW for Atlantic menhaden; HMS species change; and the extended schedule for Atlantic red snapper; swapping of Atlantic red porgy and gray triggerfish.

There was considerable discussion of the scheduling process, particularly the steps that occur following Steering Committee action. Staff recommended that Cooperators could help planning by including desired dissemination dates for assessments and desired terminal data years, as such dates heavily influence project planning. In addition, planning Council meetings further in advance will allow SEDAR to avoid overlap.

5. Other Business

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

Bob Mahood provided a budget update, and noted that further budget cuts will likely impact operations.

The Committee directed that a representative of the FL FWCC assessment group be invited to join the Steering Committee.

The Committee was provided an update on continuing efforts to update the SEDAR website. Staff noted that a proposal to develop a new website, hosted on a commercial server rather than on the SEFSC website, was under review by the SEFSC and Committee chair. The Committee supported the website change and budgeting for a dedicated SEDAR site.

6. Next Meetings

1. Spring 2014 via Webinar
   Identify 2016 Assessment projects

STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

The Committee requested that the next meeting be held in-person, ideally in conjunction with the CCC meeting in Virginia Beach in Spring 2014.

7. Adjourn

Table 3. SEDAR Assessment Projects, 2013-2016. ***ORIGINAL***

YEAR	SAFMC/Commission (Beaufort)		GMFMC/CFMC (Miami)		HMS (SEFSC/PC)	FL FWC	Procedures
	SAFMC	Commissions	GMFMC	CFMC			
2013 FINAL	1. Gray trigger B delayed 2. Blueline Tile B 3. Snowy STD 4. Black Sea U	5. GOM Menhaden (Review)	1. & 2 Red Snapper 3. Gag B 4. GAJ B 5. King mackerel B	6. Red hind B	1. ATL Sharpnose STD 2. Bonnethead STD	1. Hogfish B	
2014 FINAL	1, 2. Red Snapper B 3. *Red porgy B* 4. Gag U *(Requested change, SEFSC: Delayed completion of red snapper, June 2015 RW. Replace red porgy with gray trigger.*)	5. ATL menhaden (Review)	1, 2. King Mack B 3, 4. Red Snapper U 5. Red Grouper B *(Requested change, GMFMC: switch start times of red grouper and red snapper, conclude red snapper for December 2014 Council meeting)*	6. Queen conch 7. Spiny lobster	1. Smoothhound B 2. *Finetooth B (Requested change, HMS: Drop finetooth, assess Gulf and SA Smoothound complexes)*	1.Black Grouper U	SA Shrimp Data Evaluation *Best Practices workshop - Data Caribbean Data Poor Methods*
2015	1,-3: RS/RP or GT (continue) 4-5. tilefish, vermilion, red grouper update 1,2: scamp/gray snapper B (begin)	ATL Red Drum (Review)	1. Vermilion B 2. Gray Trigger B 3. Scamp B 4. RS or RG 5. RS or RG (either RS or RG will roll over substantially into 2015; see discussion)	6. 7.	1. 2.	1. *Yellowtail Snapper U?*	*Best Practices workshop - Assessment Methods*
2016	1, 2: scamp/gray trigger B 3. Red porgy B 4. 5.		1. Gag U 2. GAJ U 3. Red drum B 4. Yellowedge Gr. S 5. Gray Snapper B				

2017							

Table 4. 2014-2016 Assessment Projects Scenario, based on the Committee approving all Council change requests noted in this document. ***AND INCLUDING FURTHER STEERING COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AT THIS MEETING.***

FINAL

YEAR	SAFMC/Commission (Beaufort)		GMFMC/CFMC (Miami)		HMS (SEFSC/PC)	FL FWC	Procedures
	SAFMC	Commissions	GMFMC	CFMC			
2014	1-3: Red snapper/gray trigger B, begin 8/14 4. Gag U	5. ATL menhaden (Review)	1, 2. King Mack B 3, 4. Red Snapper U 5.	6. Caribbean Data poor workshop 7. data poor assess stocks (tbd following workshop)	1, 2. Smoothhound, Atl & Gom, B	Black Grouper U Mutton U – early '14 Hogfish B – for review early '14	1. SA Shrimp Data Evaluation 2. Best Practices -Data
2015	1,-3: RS/GT (cont) 4-5. tilefish, vermilion, red grouper update 1,2: scamp/gray snapper B (begin)	ATL Red Drum (Review) By 0ct '15	1. Red grouper B 2. Vermilion B 3. Gray Trigger B 4. Scamp B 5. Red Snapper S	6. Queen conch 7. Spiny lobster	1. 2.	Yellowtail Snapper U	1. Best Practices - Assessment Methods
2016	1, 2: scamp/gray snapper B 3. Red porgy B 4. 5.	ATL Croaker	1. Gag U 2. GAJ U 3. Red drum B 4. Yellowedge Gr. S 5. Gray Snapper B	6. Grunts 6spp			

2017							