

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE SUITE 201
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405

TEL 843/571-4366

FAX 843/769-4520

Toll Free 1-866-SAFMC-10

email: safmc@safmc.net web page: www.safmc.net

George Geiger, Chairman
Duane Harris, Vice Chairman

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director
Gregg T. Waugh, Deputy Executive Director

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Job Description

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The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) is the South Atlantic Council's primary technical advisory body. SSC's are charged in the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) with developing, evaluating, and peer reviewing all technical aspects of council documents. SSC are expected to provide a broad suite of technical recommendations related to all aspects of the Council's management program, including addressing biological, social, economic, and environmental aspects. SSC's also play a role in stock assessment development and review; in the Southeast region this responsibility is handled through the SEDAR process.

I. SSC Responsibilities

SSC charges stated in the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act

1. Assist in the development, collection, evaluation, and peer review of such statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information as is relevant to such Council's development and amendment of any fishery management plan.
2. Provide to the Council ongoing scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch, preventing overfishing, maximum sustainable yield, and achieving rebuilding targets, and reports on stock status and health, bycatch, habitat status, social and economic impacts of management measures, and sustainability of fishing practices.
3. Provide fishing level recommendations for use by the Council in developing annual catch limits.

4. Assist the council in developing multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes.

SSC Charges stated in the SEDAR Guidelines

1. Participate in SEDAR workshops
2. Fill dedicated SEDAR workshop positions
3. Assist in presenting SEDAR assessments to the full SSC
4. Conduct and review SEDAR assessment updates

II. SSC Objectives Stated in the SAMFC SSC Operating Procedures

1. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) shall provide expert scientific and technical advice to the Council on the development of fishery management policy, on establishing the goals and objectives of fishery management plans (FMP) or amendments, and on the preparation of such plans or amendments.
2. When requested by the Council, the SSC, through its Biological and/or Socioeconomic Subcommittees, shall supply the Council with a critical review of the scientific information necessary to make management decisions, such as stock assessments and reviews (e.g., SEDAR), reports on stock status, socioeconomic impacts of management measures, sustainability of fishing practices, and habitat and ecosystem status. Such information may include a recommendation on ABC, where appropriate, based on the best scientific information available.
3. The SSC shall assist the Council in the development, collection, and evaluation of such statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information as is relevant to the Council's development and amendment of any FMP.
4. The SSC shall assist the Council in determining what statistical, biological, economic, social or other scientific information is needed for the development of a FMP or amendment that meets the requirements of the Act; and shall advise the Council as to the best way of obtaining this information, including identifying entities with ongoing research programs that may be able to develop the needed information.
5. The SSC shall advise the Council on preparing comments on any FMP or amendments prepared by the Secretary or Secretary's delegate or other Councils which are transmitted to the Council pursuant to the Act.
6. The SSC shall comment on, if requested by the Council, any proposed regulations which the Council deems necessary to implement any FMP or any amendment to a FMP which is prepared by the Council.
7. The SSC shall assist the Council in establishing criteria for judging plan effectiveness.
8. The SSC shall submit to the Council such reports as the Committee deems appropriate and such reports as are requested by the Council.
9. The SSC shall perform such other necessary and appropriate duties as may be requested by the Council to carry out its functions under the Act.

III. Meetings and Activities to Fulfill Responsibilities and Objectives

SSC Meetings

The SSC meets twice per year in conjunction with the Council meetings in June and December. Most SSC meetings will begin Sunday afternoon and adjourn Tuesday afternoon.

Meeting time is devoted to presentation of materials, discussion of issues, and preparation of a written report for submission to the Council. The Council expects a final written report at the conclusion of each SSC meeting.

Ad-Hoc and Subcommittee Meetings

The SSC occasionally convenes topical subcommittees or ad hoc committees to address specific issues. Such committees conduct their business in the most efficient and convenient means available, which may include email strings, conference calls, and meetings. SSC members will be asked to volunteer for these committees.

SEDAR Assessment Workshops

The SSC is expected to play a major role in stock assessment development and review. This role is facilitated and supported by the SEDAR process, specifically developed to increase scientist and constituent involvement in stock assessments. SEDAR provides a mechanism for both benchmark and update assessments, with benchmarks conducted in a rigorous 3 workshop process and updates conducted primarily through the SSC and an analytical team. Several SSC members are desired for both benchmark and update workshops. SSC members are expected to volunteer to participate in SEDAR workshops.

Technical committees

Council technical committees organized around individual FMPs are being developed to increase the workforce available for SEDAR assessment tasks, develop supporting documentation and preliminary evaluates for SSC tasks such as providing fishing level recommendations required under the MSA, and produce SAFE reports. SSC members are encouraged to also participate in technical committees that are within their realm of experience and expertise.