

MRIP Transition Team: Atlantic and Gulf Subgroup

FINAL Summary

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Agenda Topics

- 1. What are the constraints on our timeline? Specifically, what is the minimum time needed for each step in the process?**
- 2. At what points in time can we evaluate progress and make decisions to keep or extend a planned timeline for one or more steps of the process?**
- 3. What are the pros and cons of taking a one year minimum approach versus a multi-year approach?**

Agenda topics were a continuation of the previous meeting.

Agenda Topic 1

*What is the **minimum** timeline to incorporate new/revised catch estimates?*

During the previous meeting, the group discussed the constraints to the general timeline for implementing the new effort survey. During this discussion, the timeline of incorporating new estimates into stock assessments was addressed. Overall, the group was not fully able to determine what will ultimately be necessary, but that it will take at least one full year after final estimates are available to complete initial stock assessments. In general, the majority of the group felt that if only changing the effort input – and no other data stream, and if the Councils determined that updating key stocks was the priority and all other assignments for stock assessors were put on hold, then it would be possible to incorporate revised estimates by the end of the second year (after minimum of one year benchmarking and having final estimates). However, there was a strong opinion that this was a very ambitious timeline, albeit the minimum needed. It was agreed that all of this was very dependent on 1) the magnitude of changes and complexity of developing a calibration model, 2) incorporating revised estimates into stock assessment models, 3) allocating resources to focus only on this effort, 4) the number of species to be assessed (see attached Table), and 4) the SSC process.

Any decision from the Transition Team/NMFS would be a recommendation to the Councils for incorporating into their plans. When the SSCs meet between September (when final revised estimates would be ready for use) and the spring, it could be determined if any assessment update would be relatively quick or slow and it could be determined how many specific stocks could be assessed. Further, once species identified, there could be additional data inputs needed

for assessments that are affected. If only changing catch statistics on the effort side, this will not affect catch rate and all stocks will be affected in the same way, depending on mode.

Agenda Topic 2

The group discussed potential points in the timeline where progress of the benchmarking process and subsequent calibration could be evaluated. Regardless of a one year or multi-year approach, it was deemed necessary to have specific points and metrics outlined in the transition plan for evaluating if moving forward with calibrating and revising estimates should occur or if further benchmarking is needed. Participants agreed that the transition plan will need to be very clear to what would trigger an extended timeline with any approach and that the plan is well thought out, transparent, and solidly communicated to partners and stakeholders.

For the minimum timeline, evaluation of the telephone and mail survey estimates could occur six to eight months into the benchmark, also focusing on differences in estimates from the four states that conducted the pilot project (would be able to compare two years of data). If at this point in the one year benchmarking approach the estimates are not looking stable, it could be decided to continue for an additional year or more. There would again be an opportunity at the end of the initial year to deem if sufficient information has been collected. The multi-year approach would be similar, but looking at estimates after one and a half years of benchmarking instead of six months, with the remaining evaluation points following a similar pattern.

It was also suggested that instead of looking at communicating and developing a minimum plan that the group develop a maximum plan, shortening the timeframe as deemed possible. For example, if the plan was to benchmark for three years with specific evaluation points, the group could determine that after two years there was sufficient data to start calibrating and revising estimates. This approach was proposed as possibly being more effective in communicating to stakeholders than providing a shorter timeframe and needing to extend.

Agenda Topic 3

Because the issue of agreement on the minimum number of years for benchmarking has yet to be decided, the group outlined the pros and cons of a one year versus a multi-year approach (see attached Tables).

The remainder of the call was focused on the necessity of releasing both the telephone and mail survey estimates to the public during the benchmarking period, but that it needs to be done in a way that ensures quality assurance and control, and also that for the duration of the benchmarking period the telephone survey estimates will still be used in management processes. It will be clearly stated in the transition plan why the mail survey numbers cannot be used during this time and when they can be considered best available data. The Team will make a recommendation on the best way to share benchmarking information.

Everyone on the Team wants to ensure that the transition plan is well developed, carried out successfully, and that the Team and NMFS can be confident with the new survey method and any revised estimates.

Benchmarking and Implementation of New Effort Survey

Table 1. Comparison of the Time Frames for Benchmarking the Mail and Telephone Survey Effort Estimates [12-16-14]

1 Year Implementation	2 or More Years Implementation
Pros	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk of stocks being fished at higher rates than for what current ACLs account for, as indicated in the pilot study data. • Current stock assessments need for better data (e.g., Red Snapper). • Potential cost savings if implementation can be done with less benchmarking. • Certainty in budget planning. • This option can always be reassessed, and modified to add additional benchmarking years. • Risk of legal challenge low because we're using the FES sooner. • Stability perceptions from industry/recreational sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time for managers to plan for implementation and understand differences in the estimates. • Calibration of historic time series improves with more years of data; greater precision/confidence; increased understanding of magnitude of change. • More time for developing calibration methodology. • Outlier year issue reduced. • Transparency of fully vetted decisions. • More studies/experiments will be completed, improving methods/data.
Cons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less time for managers to plan for implementation and understand differences in the estimates. • One year of data could be an outlier; major changes could lead to calibrations in subsequent years. • Pressure for reallocation in fisheries sooner. • Would have to recalibrate after the second year of data is added – more work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stocks may be fished at higher rates than for what current ACLs account for, as indicated in the pilot study data. • Phone survey degradation data issue; i.e., potential reduction in response rates over time may impact the quality of data. • Increased risk of legal challenge to implement new data. • Perceptions of NMFS moving too slow with better data. • Congressional pressure likely will be to implement ASAP. • Increased costs for additional years of benchmarking. • Delaying could increase risk of some partners and stakeholders choosing not to trust and support use of MRIP estimates in management decisions.

Stock Assessments

Table 2. Comparison of the Time Frames for Implementing the Mail Survey Effort Estimates into Key Stock Assessments [12-16-14]

1 Year Implementation	2 or More Years Implementation
Pros	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk of stocks being fished at higher rates than for what current ACLs account for, as indicated in the pilot study data. • New scientific information indicating much higher effort will be incorporated into assessments and management sooner. • Current stock assessments need for better data (e.g., Red Snapper). • Less complication for mixed-stock fisheries with a recreational component; all stocks will switch to FES in the same year. • Reduces the need for major revisions in the future; fine tuning when additional years are added. • Risk of legal challenge low because we're using the FES sooner. • Stability perceptions from industry/recreational sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexibility to update stock assessments, reduced pressure on staff resources.
Cons	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources to be able to conduct stock assessments concurrently. • Stock assessment data inputs could be more complicated than initially expected. • More complications if major changes are made to the models. • Precedence of doing multiple stock assessments concurrently; we may be asked to do this every year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stocks may be fished at higher rates than for current ACLs account for, as indicated in the pilot study data. • Phone survey degradation data issue. • Forecloses implementing one major change, and increases the likelihood that major changes could be needed annually for the near future. • Increase risk of legal challenge to implement new data because new scientific information indicating much higher effort was not incorporated into assessments and management sooner. • Perceptions of NMFS moving too slow with better data; Congressional pressure likely will be to implement ASAP. • Delaying could increase risk of some partners and stakeholders choosing not to trust and support use of MRIP estimates in management decisions.

Initial list of key stocks

Jurisdiction	Center	FMP	Status Stock
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gag - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Greater amberjack - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Red snapper - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gray triggerfish - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Red grouper - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Cubera snapper - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gray snapper - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gulf of Mexico Deep Water Grouper Complex
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gulf of Mexico Mid-Water Snapper Complex
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Gulf of Mexico Shallow Water Grouper Complex
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Lane snapper - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Snowy grouper - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Vermilion snapper - Gulf of Mexico
GMFMC	SEFSC	Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Yellowedge grouper - Gulf of Mexico

HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Atlantic sharpnose shark - Atlantic
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Sailfish - Western Atlantic
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Shortfin mako - North Atlantic
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Yellowfin tuna - Atlantic
HMS	SEFSC	Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species	Bluefin tuna - Western Atlantic
MAFMC	NEFSC	Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish	Atlantic mackerel - Gulf of Maine / Cape Hatteras
MAFMC	NEFSC	Bluefish	Bluefish - Atlantic Coast
MAFMC	NEFSC	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass	Black sea bass - Mid-Atlantic Coast
MAFMC	NEFSC	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass	Scup - Atlantic Coast
MAFMC	NEFSC	Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass	Summer flounder - Mid-Atlantic Coast
NEFMC	NEFSC	Northeast Multispecies	Atlantic cod - Gulf of Maine
NEFMC	NEFSC	Northeast Multispecies	Haddock - Gulf of Maine
SAFMC	SEFSC	Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic	Dolphinfish - Southern Atlantic Coast

SAFMC	SEFSC	Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic	Wahoo - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Black sea bass - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Gag - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Red snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Snowy grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Atlantic spadefish - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Bar jack - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Blue runner - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Blueline tilefish - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Gray snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Gray triggerfish - Southern Atlantic Coast

SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Greater amberjack - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Hogfish - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Lane snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Nassau grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Red grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Red porgy - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Scamp - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Deepwater Complex
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Grunts Complex
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Jacks Complex
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Porgy Complex

SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Shallow Water Snapper-Grouper Complex
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	South Atlantic Snappers Complex
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Speckled hind - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Tilefish - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Vermilion snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Warsaw grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	White grunt - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Wreckfish - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region	Yellowedge grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	King mackerel - Gulf of Mexico

SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	King mackerel - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Spanish mackerel - Gulf of Mexico
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Spanish mackerel - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Cobia - Southern Atlantic Coast
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Black grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Goliath grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Mutton snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico

SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region / Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico	Yellowtail snapper - Southern Atlantic Coast / Gulf of Mexico
SAFMC / GMFMC	SEFSC	Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic	Cobia - Gulf of Mexico