

SEDAR

SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Caribbean Fishery Management Council
NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center
NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 23, 2007

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GROUPER STOCKS TO UNDERGO ADDITIONAL SCIENTIFIC REVIEW *Steering Committee Makes Recommendation Following Recent Red Grouper Assessment*

Earlier this week, the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Steering Committee recommended additional scientific review of the 2006 South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico ‘gag’ assessments. Decisions made during the 2007 Gulf of Mexico red grouper stock assessment prompted this recommendation. These two stocks are part of a multi-species grouper fishery in which both species are frequently caught from the same vessels. Thus, the SEDAR steering committee agreed it is important to ensure a consistent scientific approach for both species.

Preliminary results of the most recent Gulf of Mexico red grouper assessment indicate the stock is in good shape, neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing and current catches are at target levels. Red grouper SEDAR participants, who include fishery scientists, fishery managers, and constituents, agree the latest red grouper assessment was extremely well done, as assessment scientists incorporated current data and cutting-edge analytical methods.

Grouper science is improving with every stock assessment. “We are all concerned about our southeast grouper stocks, from both biological and socioeconomic perspectives,” said Roy Crabtree, Southeast Regional Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service and SEDAR steering committee member. “Therefore, the steering committee felt that taking another look at recent grouper assessments is necessary and prudent given the availability of more current information.”

The review will be conducted through the SEDAR process, which was established in 2002 to assess the status of fish stocks in South Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico federal waters. A review workshop will be scheduled later this spring and will be open to the public. No date has been announced.

Alex Chester, Acting Director for the science center and steering committee Chair stated, “The outcome and feedback from the latest red grouper assessment is encouraging.” Furthermore, Chester said “It is our intent to have the very best assessments so that people can have confidence in the management decisions being made about grouper.”

The SEDAR Steering Committee meets twice per year to manage the assessment process and helps coordinate annual fishery management council activities. This interagency committee consists of members from NOAA Fisheries Service’s Southeast Fisheries Science Center and Southeast Regional Office; Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions; and the South Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils.

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On the Web:

For more information about the SEDAR process or the most current grouper SEDAR findings, log onto: <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/>