

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XB205]

**Fisheries of the South Atlantic; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Public Meeting**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of SEDAR 77 HMS Hammerhead Shark Stock Identification (ID) Webinar 2.

**SUMMARY:** The SEDAR 77 assessment of the Atlantic stock of hammerhead sharks will consist of a stock ID process, data webinars/workshop, a series of assessment webinars, and a review workshop.

**DATES:** The SEDAR 77 HMS Hammerhead Shark Stock ID Webinar 2 has been scheduled for Tuesday August 10, 2021, from 12 p.m. until 3 p.m. ET.

**ADDRESSES:**

*Meeting address:* The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public. Registration is available online at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1490341148333434635>.

*SEDAR address:* South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N Charleston, SC 29405; [www.sedarweb.org](http://www.sedarweb.org).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Kathleen Howington, SEDAR Coordinator, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; phone: (843) 571–4371; email: [Kathleen.Howington@safmc.net](mailto:Kathleen.Howington@safmc.net).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions, have implemented the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process, a multi-step method for determining the status of fish stocks in the Southeast Region. SEDAR is a three-step process including: (1) Data Workshop; (2) Assessment Process utilizing webinars; and (3) Review Workshop. The product of the Data Workshop is a data report which compiles and evaluates potential datasets and recommends which datasets are appropriate for assessment analyses. The product of the Assessment Process is a stock assessment report which describes the fisheries, evaluates

the status of the stock, estimates biological benchmarks, projects future population conditions, and recommends research and monitoring needs. The assessment is independently peer reviewed at the Review Workshop. The product of the Review Workshop is a Summary documenting panel opinions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the stock assessment and input data. Participants for SEDAR Workshops are appointed by the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Participants include: Data collectors and database managers; stock assessment scientists, biologists, and researchers; constituency representatives including fishermen, environmentalists, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); international experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

The items of discussion at the SEDAR 77 HMS Hammerhead Shark Stock ID Webinar 2 are as follows:

- Participants will use review genetic studies, growth patterns, and any other relevant information on hammerhead shark stock structure.
- Participants will make final recommendations on biological stock structure and define the unit stock or stocks to be addressed through this assessment.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the intent to take final action to address the emergency.

**Special Accommodations**

This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 business days prior to the meeting.

*Note:* The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: July 8, 2021.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

*Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XB221]

**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meeting**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Wednesday August 4, 2021, from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. For agenda details, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held via webinar. Details on the proposed agenda, webinar listen-in access, and any meeting materials will be posted at [www.mafmc.org/meetings](http://www.mafmc.org/meetings).

*Council address:* Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674–2331; [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, telephone: (302) 526–5255.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** During this meeting, the Council and the ASMFC's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board will reconsider revisions to the commercial black sea bass state allocations previously approved through the Council's Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment and the Commission's Addendum XXXIII. Background materials will be posted to [www.mafmc.org/meetings](http://www.mafmc.org/meetings).

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions

will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

### Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kathy Collins at the Council Office, (302) 526-5253, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: July 7, 2021.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

*Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XB224]

### Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice for request of proposals for Ageing Study on Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish.

**SUMMARY:** The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is requesting proposals from qualified contractors to organize and conduct an Expanded Sampling and Ageing Study on Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish.

**DATES:** This will be a 24-month project and a maximum \$250,000 is available to fund the work. Proposal Submission Deadline: August 13, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** *Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 4701 W Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. John Froeschke, Deputy Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; [john.froeschke@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:john.froeschke@gulfcouncil.org); telephone: (813) 348-1630.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### Proposal Submission Deadline Friday, August 13, 2021

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) seeks a highly-qualified contractor to organize and conduct an ageing study on Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) gray triggerfish, *Balistes capriscus*. The Term of Contract is 24 months and Maximum Funding Available for Work is \$250,000. The contractor is tasked with evaluating and proposing new techniques to efficiently sample, process, and utilize different ageing structures (*i.e.*, spines and otoliths) for gray triggerfish in the Gulf. Proposal applicants are encouraged to develop work plans to collaborate with state and federal partners to collect representative samples across a range of age classes. Typically, the various Gulf state and federal creel and port samplers would be able to contribute to this work; however, otoliths are not currently taken at dockside intercepts under current sample collection protocols. Sampling gray triggerfish otoliths that are small, fragile, and difficult to extract may require obtaining filleted carcasses (*i.e.*, racks) from fishery-dependent intercepts. If additional samples are necessary, the proposal may consider an effective method for field collection of gray triggerfish otoliths and dorsal spines.

Gray triggerfish have historically been aged by counting translucent zones in the first dorsal spine since gray triggerfish otoliths are small, fragile, and difficult to extract. During the Data/Assessment workshop deliberations for SEDAR 62, it was noted that a study applying bomb radiocarbon validation to compare spine and otolith ages routinely resulted in lower age estimates from spines versus otoliths, and called into question the reliability of growth estimates derived from spine-based ages (Patterson et al. 2019: SEDAR62-WP-17).

### Background

During its January 2021 meeting, the Council identified unspent Council funds in 2020. These unspent funds were primarily due to limited travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council is considering funding a research study, on the ageing of gray triggerfish, that could be completed, available, and contributory to the scheduled SEDAR Research Track assessment of Gulf gray triggerfish to begin in 2024. The last assessment for Gulf gray triggerfish (SEDAR 62) was terminated because of irreconcilable data issues, with ageing of gray triggerfish being an outstanding concern.

Gray triggerfish have historically been aged by counting translucent zones in the first dorsal spines since gray triggerfish otoliths tend to be small, fragile, and difficult to extract. Allman *et al.* (2016) conducted an age validation study of gray triggerfish spines that revealed two peaks in translucent zone formation, which was interpreted as a doublet pattern (two closely spaced translucent zones) representing a single year in the life. However, during workshop deliberations for SEDAR 62, it was noted that a study applying bomb radiocarbon validation to compare spine and otolith ages resulted in otolith ages better aligning with known regional coral and otolith carbon-14 values compared to spines, which under-aged known records. Whereas, the comparison of vertebra versus otolith-derived ages indicated a close agreement (Patterson *et al.* 2019: SEDAR62-WP-17).

Shervette *et al.* (2021), conducted a study on gray triggerfish in Ghana and U.S. South Atlantic that compared ageing of spines and otoliths. They also developed a methodology for removing the otoliths from gray triggerfish. Whole otoliths were submerged in water and read against a black background with magnified stereoscope, and then each opaque zone was counted. Spines were also read and fish were aged by counting the number of translucent zones in the spine section. Two independent readers with ageing experience of 8 years +, read the otoliths and spines. This study found age estimates for spines ranged from 1 to 8 years and for otoliths 3 to 13 years. An age bias plot indicating a potential ageing bias starting at age-3 between spines and otoliths of gray triggerfish. Therefore, the Council is interested in funding an age study for Gulf gray triggerfish to reconcile ageing differences in hard parts. The Council also seeks expert advice from funded work to determine whether it is possible to develop an algorithm to convert spine-based ages to the more accurate otolith-based ages for Gulf gray triggerfish.

### Scope of Work

The contractor will be responsible for all data products outlined below and is encouraged to contribute additional products and suggestions in the proposal for this work. The selected contractor is also responsible for a mid-term project summary report and a presentation of the final results to the Scientific and Statistical Committees and the Council. The proposed scope of work should include the following: