

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
SCIAENIDS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**Webinar
August 3, 2021
Approved May 2, 2022**

Proceedings of the Sciaenids Management Board Webinar
August 2021

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1. **Approval of Agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings** of March 2021 by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to approve the Atlantic Croaker FMP Review for the 2020 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status requests for New Jersey, Delaware, South Carolina and Georgia** (Page 14). Motion by Joe Cimino; second by Mel Bell. Motion approved by unanimous consent (Page 14).
4. **Move to approve the Red Drum FMP Review for the 2020 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for New Jersey and Delaware** (Page 14). Motion by Joe Cimino; second by Mel Bell. Motion approved by consent (Page 14).
5. **Move to approve the Atlantic Croaker State Implementation Plan from Florida** (Page 15). Motion by Pat Geer; second by Spud Woodward. Motion approved by consent (Page 15).
6. **Move to nominate Chris Batsavage as Vice-chair of the Sciaenids Management Board** (Page 17). Motion by John Clark; second by Pat Geer. Motion carried (Page 17).
7. **Motion to adjourn** by consent (Page 17).

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ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Tom Fote, NJ (GA)	Jerry Mannen, NC (GA)
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Asm. Houghtaling (LA)	Mel Bell, SC, proxy for Phil Maier (AA)
John Clark, DE, proxy for D. Saveikis (AA)	Malcolm Rhodes, SC (GA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)	Doug Haymans, GA (AA)
Lynn Fegley, MD, proxy for B. Anderson (AA) Chair	Spud Woodward, GA (GA)
Russell Dize, MD (GA)	Erika Burgess, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
David Sikorski, MD, proxy for Del. Stein (LA)	Marty Gary, PRFC
Pat Geer, VA, proxy for S. Bowman (AA)	Jack McGovern, NMFS

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Dawn Franco, Atl. Croaker Technical Committee Chair	Harry Rickabaugh, Black Drum & Spot Technical Committee Chair
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Staff

Robert Beal	Chris Jacobs
Toni Kerns	Jeff Kipp
Tina Berger	Savannah Lewis
Lisa Carty	Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Pat Campfield	Sarah Murray
Kristen Anstead	Mike Rinaldi
Emilie Franke	Caitlin Starks
Lisa Havel	Deke Tompkins

Guests

Mike Armstrong, MA DMF	Harry Hornick, MD DNR	Gerry O'Neill, Cape Seafoods
Pat Augustine, Coram, NY	Raymond Kane, MA (GA)	Morgan Paris, SC DENR
Rob Bourdon, MD DNR	Adam Kenyon, VMRC	Will Poston, SGA
Dick Brame	Kathy Knowlton, GA DNR	Olivia Siegal, VMRC
Mike Celestino, NJ DEP	Wilson Laney	Ethan Simpson, VMRC
Derek Cox, FL SWC	Mike Luisi, MD DNR	David Stormer, DE DFW
Jessica Daher, NJ DEP	Loren Lustig, PA (GA)	Mike Waive, ASA
Jennifer Farmer, VMRC	Chip Lynch, NOAA	Craig Weedon, MD DNR
Anthony Friedrich, SGA	Shanna Madsen, VMRC	Angel Willey, MD DNR
Alexa Galvan, VMRC	Chris McDonough, SC DNR	Chris Wright, NOAA
Matt Gates, CT DEEP	Allison Murphy, NOAA	Renee Zobel, NJ FGD
Lewis Gillingham, VMRC	Kennedy Neill	
Helen Heumacher, USFWS	George O'Donnell, MD DNR	

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The Sciaenid Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened via webinar; Tuesday, August 3, 2021, and was called to order at 3:15 p.m. by Chair Lynn Fegley.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR LYNN FEGLEY: Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the Sciaenid Board. My name is Lynn Fegley; I represent the state of Maryland, and am honored to serve as your Chair today.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR FEGLEY: I think we have a pretty straightforward agenda. By the first order of business, I'll ask if anybody has any requests for changes to the agenda, or is there any opposition to the agenda? If anybody wants a change, or has a problem with it, please raise your hand.

MS. TONI KERNS: I Have no hands, Lynn.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Fantastic. I will say that we're going to make a really minor adjustment. I guess I should have said this first. There is an action item listed for Item 5, which is a black drum TLA and stock assessment. We actually do not need action there. That is really just going to be an update for the Board.

We do have the single action item having to do with the croaker and red drum FMP Review, so that is going to be the extent of our action items today.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR FEGLEY: The next order of business would be approval of the proceedings that are in the meeting materials. These are the proceedings from the spring meeting, March of 2021. Does anybody have any changes to be made, or issues with the proceedings? If you do, please raise your hand.

MS. KERNS: I have no hands.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Great, fantastic.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR FEGLEY: All right, we'll move right along to Number 3, which is Public Comment. Is there anybody from the public who would like to address the Board about something that is not currently on the agenda, please raise your hand?

MS. KERNS: I don't see any hands.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay.

REVIEW TRAFFIC LIGHT ANALYSIS FOR SPOT AND ATLANTIC CROAKER

CHAIR FEGLEY: So the first meaty item we have here is to Review the Traffic Light Analysis for Spot and Atlantic Croaker. This is going to be the update TLA for the 2020 fishing year. We're going to get some recommendations along with this, because of some missing data issues due to COVID, and due to some survey calibrations. Looking forward to a good presentation, and I will hand it off to Dawn Franco and Harry Rickabaugh.

MR. HARRY RICKABAUGH: Thank you, Madam Chair, this is Harry Rickabaugh. I'm going to go ahead and get started. I believe, Maya, you're going to switch the slides for me. I'm going to go over the first two parts of this for the impacts of the data from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have quite a few, and then I will go over the 2021 Traffic Light Analysis for spot. Then I'll turn it over to Dawn, and she will go over the 2021 TLA for Atlantic croaker.

Okay, so the first one here actually is not so much COVID related, as the ChesMMAP Survey had a gear and vessel change in 2019. They did do some side-by-side comparison tows with the new and old vessel and gear, but the calibrations have not been completed as of yet, to be able to basically convert the old data into the new unit, so that we can compare the old and new vessels.

We do not currently have a 2019 or 2020 ChesMMAP Index. The survey did conduct sampling in 2020, so we will have that data eventually. But for this year we are missing both of those, which

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that survey is used in the adult index for both spot and croaker, and the juvenile index for spot as well, so we're going to be missing those.

Again, they should have the calibrations done by the spring of 2022, so hopefully we'll have the 2019, 2020, and 2021 for you next year. Several other surveys did have issues directly related to the pandemic. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center Survey multispecies bottom trawl and the SEAMAP bottom trawl, neither of those were conducted at all in 2020.

We're completely missing those values. The SEAMAP survey is used both in the croaker and spot adult index, as well as in informing the shrimp trawl discard information. We have to mention that we also produce a supplementary information. We'll get to that later on, but we don't have those values, and also the Northeast Fisheries Science Center trawl is also used in adult index for both croaker and spot in the Mid-Atlantic region.

A couple of their state surveys were also affected. The North Carolina Program 195, which is a trawl survey, is used in the spot adult and juvenile indices, and the croaker juvenile indices. It did survey in 2020, but it was limited. They did not do any overnight trips, and only from stations that were relatively close to a port. They sampled 28 of their 54 usual samples.

The VIM survey also did some sampling in 2020 that is used as a croaker juvenile index. Only sampled in June however, and not all areas were sampled. That whole time series has been recalibrated by VIMS, to only include that time and those sites that were sampled the entire time series, to give us something to look at for this year, as something maybe we'll look at doing differently, or ask them to do differently in the future.

But that's all we have available to us for now that came available last minute, so that is what we had to work with. We appreciate them getting us something. I also via MRIP data, it is affected through the lack of some APAIS sampling within

states. The effect was different state to state, as many of you probably know.

MRIP still estimated values for all states, but they used some computed data from the previous two years. That varies from state to state by species, but that is just to let you know that even though estimates are available, they aren't completely relying on 2020 data. Similarly, commercial data is available, but there could be some impacts to the pandemic through reduced demand for certain species. That is something we can't really quantify, as it varies by species by species and area by area. But likely there could have been some reduced effort due to reduced market demand.

Next year the TC will evaluate a lot of the missing data points, when hopefully we have 2021 and 2019 data on either side of the missing, the gaps basically to try to determine how we're going to fill those. For both of these traffic light analyses, both TCs decided the best course of action was not to report on any of the triggering indices, like the composite indices, where we combine two together.

If one was missing, we didn't present that, because of composite index. We're listing that as unknown for now, and hopefully we can fill that in and better update you next year. Just as a reminder, management action was tripped in 2020, and put in place in 2021 for both species. For spot, I'm going to move into the spot TLA now.

For spot the measures cannot be relaxed until 2023. Essentially, these TLAs we're looking at an update for the Board, and the only real thing that could happen would be a trigger at the next higher level, the 60 percent level, since both species did trigger at the lower 30 percent level. For spot, this is the harvest composite, so this includes both recreational and commercial harvest, split out by the Mid-Atlantic and South-Atlantic Region.

The top figure being the Mid-Atlantic, as you can see in 2020, it was below the 30 percent threshold. For spot the triggering mechanism is two of the previous three years, so since both 2018 and 2019 were above the 30 percent threshold, spot still

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would have been triggered in the Mid-Atlantic Region in 2020.

In the South Atlantic you can see that the proportion of red has been somewhat higher and consistently high through about the last five years was 54 percent red in 2020. Again, that would have equaled a tripped index, as it is all three of the final three years. Just as a reminder, since we did trigger management action in 2020, and we put it in place in 2021.

The harvest composite will not be able to trigger management action, or indicate that management action is no longer required moving forward. The regulations we put in place should reduce harvest, meaning it will increase the amount of red, so it's kind of a negative feedback loop, if you will.

The more we ratchet down landings through regulation, we're going to artificially, in theory at least, increase the amount of red. Of course, the regulations we put in place weren't large reductions, so it is possible that we could see steady or even declining red if we have improvement and recruitment, and/or survivability of either species.

For the adult abundance composite, the Mid-Atlantic uses the Northeast Fisheries Science Survey and the ChesMMAP survey, and as I mentioned in the beginning, we do not have the ChesMMAP survey for both 2019 and 2020, so we're considering that status unknown for this year, because we only have one of the terminal three years. As you can see, the last eight years we do have available were above the 30 percent threshold, which is why we're currently triggered, but until we get that ChesMMAP data, and can backfill the 2020 value that we're missing from the Northeast Fisheries Science survey, we're not going to know whether that has improved or moved, find out whether it's increased.

In the South Atlantic however, the past more than 10 years have been below the 30 percent threshold from the adult composite index, which is the SEAMAP survey and the North Carolina Program 195 trawl survey. You actually see some increasing

green towards the end of the time series. Again, we're missing 2020, but in this case, it was two of the terminal three years were below the 30 percent threshold. This one would not have tripped.

This is supplementary information, as I alluded to earlier in the presentation, and it's the shrimp trawl discard estimates. The graph on the left is the upper, which declined pretty steadily into the early 2000s, and has been somewhat variable at a lower level since. The right figure is the actual estimates in millions of fish discarded.

As I mentioned, SEAMAP was not available, but the estimate is informed by both SEAMAP and the observer coverage. Both of those are used for the actual catch portion of the estimate. We did have observer coverage data. However, there was no coverage from April through July, due to the pandemic.

Even though the coverage is available, it's not full year coverage as in previous years. Looking at, the TC did look at the comparison of just SEAMAP, I'm sorry, the abundance estimates with and without SEAMAP, so just the observer coverage, or the observer coverage and SEAMAP. They tracked fairly well.

There are one or two years where they don't trend together, but there are several years where if they are trending in the same direction, one would be significantly higher or lower than the other, such as the 2019 you'll see on the graph is a pretty high estimate, and that was driven more by SEAMAP than the observer coverage.

We use the SEAMAP, it was originally used in the estimate to look at hindcast back beyond when observer coverage was available, so that's how we're getting estimates back to 1990. This is the juvenile indices for spot. These are not composites, they are individual indexes for each region. The Mid-Atlantic uses the MD Seine Survey, which was not affected by the pandemic.

It was conducted as it usually would be. As you can see, the values have been very low, we have high proportions of red for approximately 10 years, and

then in 2020 we did have a value that was above the reference period mean. In the South Atlantic, there you see more variability. Again, the North Carolina index was available, even though it was limited sampling, it was just over 50 percent of samples were conducted.

It did show a higher level of red, but there have been some more above the mean indices for the South Atlantic Region in the juvenile index in recent years. This is a summary table, so it just summarizes the metrics that do trigger management action by region. The lightly blue shaded area is the actual metric. Then on the right we have the three years that would be used to trigger management action, and what the outlook was for each of those years. But again, for the Mid-Atlantic harvest, we had two of the three years in red, above the 30 percent threshold in red, excuse me, with the 2020 value being just below that. The South Atlantic we're looking at 52 to 59 percent red for all three years.

Now we'll move down to the adult abundance index. Again, we're considering the Mid-Atlantic unknown, because two of the previous three years we do not have a value for. The South Atlantic adult index we do not have the 2020 year, but we do have two of the previous three. Those years were below 30 percent red, and actually had more green than red in each of those years.

For the overall status, we're considering it could be triggered at the 30 percent level, even though we are missing some of that data. We can't definitively say that we are triggered, but since we're already in the trigger, we triggered previously in the previous year, we can't change major action anyway.

In reality, we have to remain status quo, and fortunately we don't have any of these values for the 60 percent red that are available. We are looking at the increased level of action anytime soon. With that I will take any questions on either the spot TLA or the missing 2020 datapoints.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Great, thank you, Harry, that was an excellent presentation, very much appreciate the

thought that you guys put into this issue of missing data. Are there any questions for Harry?

MS. KERNS: Looks like he's stumped the Board, Lynn. I don't see any hands.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Wow, good job, Harry. Okay, well seeing no questions, let's go ahead and move on to Dawn, I think you're up.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

MS. DAWN FRANCO: All right, thank you so much. As previous years, it's going to be very similar for what I talk about for croaker as what Harry talked about for spot. Harry, thanks for setting me up so nicely. For Atlantic croaker, just like Harry said, management action was tripped in 2020, and then management actions were put into place early 2021, and those will be continued until 2023.

Then these are the harvest composites for the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Regions, and again these are recreational and commercial landings combined for these two. In the Mid-Atlantic we have exceeded 30 percent for the seventh year in a row, with the past three years triggering at above 60 percent, so 2017 is a little tricky, because it looks like it is 60 percent, but it's actually 59.2 percent.

Officially, only 2018 and 2020 are above 60 percent. Then the South Atlantic, we have exceeded 30 percent for the eighth year in a row, indicating continued concern for these graphics. Then we have our adult abundance composite indices, and as stated earlier, we do have several data gaps, so for the Mid-Atlantic we do not have data points for 2019 and 2020 because of ChesMMAAP calibration. Then also, no data points for any NEFSC trawl for 2020. It just made more sense to leave it at 2018, rather than have a bunch of unknowns in there. The 2018 datapoint for the Mid-Atlantic is actually 58.5, so we did not officially meet or exceed 60 percent in the past three out of the four years, because remember this is different than spot that we have three out of the four previous years, rather than two out of the three.

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Also, you might notice the South Atlantic abundance graphic is a little bit different than what was in the report. We had included 2020, but we decided to cap it at 2019, because we were missing the SEAMAP data that was only data from the South Carolina trammel net survey. In this graphic, we only went through 2019.

But we haven't exceeded even 30 percent, it's been mostly green for the South Atlantic adult abundance since 2010. I believe that covers everything for that one. The adult abundance and harvest are about the same as what we saw last year, triggering at about 30 percent for the last three out of the four years.

Then again, this should look very similar, especially on the left for net hours fished. For the shrimp trawl fishery that is exactly the same as you saw for spot, slightly different for the discards in millions of fish. It's a little bit different, but follows the same trend just like Harry was saying. We looked at it split out for CPUE for observer data versus SEAMAP data, and it trends well, but there was a higher estimate of CPUE for SEAMAP in 2019, which we think is influencing that 2019 data point.

Then 2020 is only the observer data, we do not have SEAMAP data to fill in that gap just yet. This is also another supplemental piece of information. The juvenile indices fell again in the Mid-Atlantic, only through 2018, because we do not have the ChesMMAP data, but hopefully next year we can update everyone with those gaps filled in, but as you can see, we have a fair amount of red still in the Mid-Atlantic region for the juvenile abundance composite.

The lines are not filled in for us, so we are still below 0.6, except for 2018, or below 60 percent. Then similar to spot we have more green than red in the South Atlantic juvenile composite, which really technically isn't a composite for the South Atlantic, because it's only the North Carolina 195 survey.

Then we come to our final slide that breaks all of the info that I just shared down into a neat little

package, to demonstrate if we have exceeded, trips our trigger. The Mid-Atlantic composite harvest triggered at 60 percent, with the South Atlantic remaining at a 30 percent level. That was for the harvest composite, where we have all data available.

Then we have several unknown values for the adult abundance index, and even if we assume the worst-case scenario of unknowns being above the 50 percent, that would not be enough to trigger further management action, because we would not have three out of the four years above 60 percent.

Therefore, final status is Atlantic croaker remains triggered at the 30 percent level. Then by the next TLA, we should have ChesMMAP calibrations to refill in the data holes from 2019 and 2020, and hopefully mechanisms to fill in the other 2020 data gap. The TC recommended maintaining the course, and no further management action is suggested at this time. I will take any questions that you might have.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thank you, Dawn, excellent presentation. I just want to say for the record that the number of those shrimp trawl discards still boggles my mind. But I think we're good. I think we dodged a little bit of a bullet here, because everything is remaining in line with where we've been. Since we've all implemented management actions for 2021, we'll be able to hold until next year and see what we get when we analyze the 2021 update. With that, are there any questions for Dawn, or any throwback to Harry. Please raise your hand if you have a question.

MS. KERNS: Pat Geer.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Go ahead, Pat.

MR. PAT GEER: I guess this question is for Dawn. I'm just kind of wondering. I'm looking at Figure 7 that is showing the discards of croaker in the Southeast Atlantic in the shrimp fishery, but the decline that we're seeing there, part of that has to do with the implementation of the requirement of

bycatch reduction devices, which occurred in the late '90s.

I'm wondering if that dataset should be truncated to that point, because the introduction of the bycatch reduction devices obviously has had an impact on bycatch, so those large numbers that you see in the early '90s, are probably not representative of the fishery at all today.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Savannah, could you go back to that slide so we could see what Pat is referring to, or Dawn, whoever is controlling the screen.

MS. SAVANNAH LEWIS: I think it's Maya. I think Maya is controlling the slide.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Sorry, hi Maya.

MS. FRANCO: He needs Slide 14.

MR. GEER: Figure 7 is what it was in the document. There you are, right there.

MS. FRANCO: Yes, I think that's a great point for us to bring back to the TC and discuss, because that is absolutely what is causing the major decline, very high discards in the early '90s. Yes, I think it's a great point, Pat. I think we should definitely discuss, and I don't know if the shorter timeline would be an issue for some people. I'm not entirely sure, but definitely a good point.

MR. GEER: The behavior and how the fishery is propagated after that, you know requiring a total excluder device, and requiring the bycatch reduction devices, all flow with bycatch, you know substantially. I would think that any data that we use should be doing post bycatch reduction device.

MS. FRANCO: I will definitely make a note of that, thank you.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, thanks Pat, and thanks Dawn. Any other questions?

MS. KERNS: I don't have any other hands, Lynn.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A TRAFFIC LIGHT ANALYSIS AND BENCHMARK

STOCK ASSESSMENT FOR BLACK DRUM

CHAIR FEGLEY: All right, well thank you very much for the presentation, and the next item on our agenda, we're going to move over to black drum, and talk about the TC recommendations for a traffic light analysis and a benchmark stock assessment. We talked a little bit about this the last Board meeting, and I believe that Harry has got some updates for us, so Harry, take it away when you're ready.

MR. RICKABAUGH: Just before I move on to this, I just would like to thank Chris McDonough from South Carolina for the traffic light analysis. He did pretty much all the analysis for both spot and croaker. This year was particularly challenging with all the data gaps, and having to bounce back and forth for TC recommendations.

I forgot to mention that before I started that presentation. I didn't want to leave him out, he did most of the work. On the black drum, I'm going to give a little bit of background on the previous assessment. The TCs previous conversations about assessment timing, and then I will go on to just a brief overview of the TCs discussions, deciding between a benchmark assessment and a traffic light analysis, and then the recommendations the TC came out of from that discussion.

The first, well it was the first stock assessment for black drum, was conducted in 2014, but data through 2012. We looked at a few different data poor modeling structures, and the preferred model by both the Stock Assessment Subcommittee and the Peer Review Team was the depletion-based stock reduction analysis.

It did provide reference points, which were accepted by the Board for management use, was early 2015. Now those reference points obviously were derived using the previous telephone-based estimate surveys from MRIP, so we cannot currently compare our reference points to evaluate stock status to the current plan.

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That was one of the major, I guess drawbacks, shortly after we finished that assessment, was that change, and then we weren't able to evaluate the stock again to those reference points. The TC met in 2019, to review data and decide on the timing of the next assessment, which was originally scheduled for 2020 for the year prior to the previous scheduled assessment.

At that point the TC recommended delaying the assessment to 2022, to allow for a longer time series in a couple of the surveys, and to also allow for some aging of archived age structures. The TC also recommended that the next assessment be a benchmark and not an update. That was one of the other things we debated quite a while back then, and decided that it would be best to try to improve on the model structure.

The peer review of the previous assessment did recommend trying to incorporate an index into either the DB-SRA or one of the other model options we tried, to see if we could get something a little better, a little more informative of the stock status. Then of course, the PRT met, as you well know, before the last Board meeting, and recommended to the Board that we look at the traffic light analysis to monitor the stock status in between, until we do another assessment. Partially probably based on the fact that we did not decide to do the previous assessment on time, and that we delayed it, and also because it's been quite a while since we've had some method to actually look at where the stock is.

The TC did meet earlier this year, April of this year, to evaluate the available data again, and discuss the use of a TLA or an assessment. Both the Stock Assessment Team from ASMFC and the TC were in agreement that trying to do both at the same time was not going to be probably a successful endeavor.

They are both very time involved, and trying to develop a TLA from scratch is probably a little more involved than most people would realize, and doesn't necessarily use some of the same techniques, or you wouldn't want to use the indices

in the same way. It's not really just adding on, it's a whole different project.

We decided we needed to do one or the other, and so we looked at which we thought would be better for evaluating the stock in the near term. The TC met, and we discussed the pros and cons in pretty much a good bit of detail, actually. I'm just going to summarize up for you really quick, I'm not going to go into a whole lot of detail.

This particular Board, of course, is familiar with TLA, since we've been using it for spot and croaker, so I'm not going to give a lot of background on that either. For a stock assessment, our current schedule is a five-year cycle, which means basically it will only be updated every five years, unless we have a reason to run an update early, due to stock status, or to get delayed again it wouldn't be done on a five-year schedule, where a TLA is generally updated annually.

A stock assessment does provide a very technical report with tables and figures that are peer reviewed, and a peer review report as well, giving recommendations for how the stock assessment could be improved in the future in its strengths and weaknesses. Where a TLA is usually developed outside of a peer review, there is a little less technical document, which could be a plus or a minus.

It is easier for a less technical audience to interpret the final product than a stock assessment may be. A stock assessment does produce reference points that are calculated within the assessment, and then those reference points can be used to calculate a response, if needed, for management. In other words, if we would cross the threshold and decide we need to reduce by a certain amount.

We could at least use our reference points to have a good gauge on how much we would need to reduce to get that. Where with a traffic light, threshold is generally assigned through, it's a lot more subjective. There is not like really a mathematical way to determine exactly at what percentage red you would need and then for how many years.

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There is a little more professional judgment in there, and to determine at what level you're going to trigger how many years you need to be there, and because of that, that makes the management response not be able to be calculated from the traffic light itself. It would have to be done outside, which means there is a little bit of a disconnect there from the level triggered to then, you would have to use some other data, or if you did have a stock assessment reference point to use, you would use that. With the stock assessment, we could also update that if we had, say a management put into place, and we wanted to see whether we were moving in the right direction. You could run the update and see where you're at.

Where with a traffic light, generally it's almost the opposite, particularly if you're relying heavily on fishery dependent data, such as landings. Once you trigger management action, as I had mentioned in the croaker and spot, that you really can't then use those data to see if you are making progress, because of the negative feedback.

The more you cut back landings, the higher those fishery dependent indices and/or values will be in the red, as opposed to showing you an improvement. Also again, if you trigger management action, it could reduce which metric you could use, and as I'll touch on later, the TC thought that we probably would be heavily reliant with this particular species, on fishery dependent data.

For the stock assessment, the peer review of the last assessment, and the TC, both agreed that probably having some sort of guardrail metric, which I think in the assessment they call it roster of metrics, but the same sort of idea, where aside from just a reference point that we can identify some, either indices or other metrics that look like they may not be something we can incorporate into the assessment itself, but may be giving us beneficial information such as juvenile indices, or even some adult indices.

We can track those as well. In other words, if we were between, say the target and the threshold, we could look at these metrics, and see if they were trending up or down as well, and see how concerned we should be. This would be kind of a way to have something to evaluate annually, similar to a traffic light, as opposed to just waiting five years to run the assessment again.

Some of the discussion the TC had on the data and on the comparison of a traffic light to a stock assessment were, first the data issue with the MRIP. As mentioned before, the previous assessment did not use the current MRIP estimates, because they weren't available, obviously. Comparing the two, the newer estimates do tend to be higher, particularly in the most recent years, which likely is just going to move the values of the stock assessment up.

Everything will probably just higher abundances and reference points is probably what the bottom line would be there. The proportion of released alive fish has increased, which isn't surprising. It's likely attributed to the minimum size limit that was required by the FMP when it went into place.

There has been a recent increase in recreational trips targeting black drum, according to the MRIP estimates, which is likely due to effort shifting from other species, such as weakfish remain depleted, increased size limits and truncation of the season for summer flounder and a few other species. Then the TC all agree, one of the big points though, is we felt we did need to update these reference points, since we cannot currently evaluate the reference points from a previous assessment. We felt that was highly needed. We still are probably going to be in a data poor structure, the data we looked at, we probably don't have enough to advance the model beyond that. We probably can make improvements within that data poor modeling framework, to make a more solid stock status to provide to the Board. Setting reference periods for the TLA would be somewhat difficult.

A lot of the independent indices we have aren't very long time series, which is a very long-lived

species. Ideally you would have one generation time or at least close to it. That would be tough to do, we basically are using an entire time series as our reference period. Evaluation of the data didn't really reveal a really good coastwide, long term, independent index, which is another thing that is going to hinder us moving from a data poor assessment.

I would also, as I mentioned earlier, necessitate us relying heavily on removals for TLA, which isn't ideal, considering once you trigger then that kind of limits your ability to use the TLA to see where you're at. The take home message from the TC, our recommendation would be to go ahead and conduct the next benchmark stock assessment as scheduled in 2022.

As already touched upon earlier, we will provide updated reference points. It is going to probably remain a data poor approach, but we may be able to improve on our current DB-SRA model, and we will attempt to identify or if possible, guardrail metrics, which could help monitor the stock along with the reference points on an annual basis, rather than wait five years for the next assessment. With that I'll take any questions.

CHAIR FEGLEY: All right, thank you, Harry. Just a quick question for you. You said that you would begin working on this assessment in 2022, and is it scheduled for completion in 2022 as well, or would we see the results in 2023?

MR. RICKABAUGH: I believe it's scheduled for completion in 2022. I would have to defer to ASMFC staff to be certain what they would think would be possible with that.

MR. JEFF KIPP: Hi, this is Jeff, I could jump in.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thanks, Jeff.

MR. KIPP: Yes, so it would be scheduled for 2022, so we would anticipate the assessment at least by the Technical Committee being completed in 2022. There have been some occurrences where a peer review might happen, like the following January.

Not completely clear on timing yet when that peer review would occur. But the assessment would be completed by the TC and out to peer review by 2022.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Excellent, thank you for that. I just want to say, I think this approach makes sense. I think getting that updated MRIP data into a benchmark is critical, and if we're in a place where we can get reference points for this fishery, I just think that's such a more powerful and effective management tool than the traffic light. I appreciate your deliberations on this. Are there any questions from the Board?

MS. KERNS: Just giving a second to see if any hands went up, but I currently do not have any hands raised, Lynn. Harry is really good at stumping today.

CHAIR FEGLEY: It's been a long day, and I think good job on behalf of our presenters making it all so clear.

**CONSIDER ATLANTIC CROAKER AND RED DRUM
FMP REVIEW AND STATE COMPLIANCE FOR THE
2020 FISHING YEAR**

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, well, seeing no questions we will then move right along to Agenda Item Number 6, where we Consider Atlantic Croaker and Red Drum FMP Review and State Compliance for the 2020 Fishing Year. Just a reminder to everyone. I will be looking for some motions at the end of these presentations and discussion. Savannah, I think it's off to you.

MS. LEWIS: Hi everybody, good afternoon. Thank you, Madam Chair for the opportunity to present this today. I'll keep this pretty brief, but I'm going to be presenting the Red Drum and Atlantic Croaker Fishery Management Plan Review. I'm going to start with red drum. For red drum the PRT did meet, and we did overhaul some of the sections of this review this year to include, regional breakdowns of the different metrics.

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In 2020, 56 percent of the total landings came from the southern region, where the fishery is exclusively recreational. Here on this graph the southern region is represented in the blue bars, and the northern region in the green bars. These shifts are a significant change from the 2019 regional split, where 20 percent of total landings of recreational landings were from the northern region, and 80 percent from the southern.

Recreational landings were estimated to be 2.5 million pounds in the northern region, a 173 percent increase from the 2019 estimates. North Carolina is estimated to have the most recreational landings, followed by Virginia. Recreational landings were estimated to be 3.3 million pounds in the southern region, which is a slight decrease from 2019 estimates.

Florida is estimated to have the most pounds of recreational landings, followed by South Carolina. These two figures show recreational removals by region, with northern removals on top, and southern removals on the bottom. You can see the different colored bars represent the number of fish landed, as well as estimated dead discards.

The number of fish caught in the recreational fishery was just over 670,000 fish, which is up 120 percent from 2019 for the northern region. It is estimated that 8 percent of released fish die as a result of being caught, which gives us an estimated value for dead discarded fish of about 290,000 in 2020.

Recreational removals from the northern region fishery are estimated to be about 962,000 fish in 2020. The number of fish caught in the southern region recreational fishery was about 1 million fish, again a decrease from 2019. It is estimated that 8 percent of released fish die, and as a result there is an estimated 420,000 dead discarded fish in 2020. Recreational removals from the southern region of the fishery are estimated to be about 1.4 million fish in 2020. This graph shows the removals compared to their releases. What you can see here is northern and southern regions, and I apologize for the color, I couldn't get them to match, but the bar graph on the bottom is representative of what

we just saw, with total removals as the bars from the northern region in blue bars and the southern region in green bars. The releases for each region are the line graphs. Releases for the northern region are green, and southern region are blue. You can see that the number of releases far exceeds the total removals from each region. The number of fish released in the northern region was 3.6 million fish, which compared to the removals was 962,000 fish.

The number of fish released declined to those in 2019 for the southern region, with 5.3 million fish released, and compared to total removals of 1.5 million fish. There is a correction in the report. On Figure 4, the proportion of regional sector-specific landings to total coastwide landings, the green for the northern region represents recreational, not commercial fisheries, and that has been updated since.

The PRT met and reviewed all state compliance reports, and compiled the FMP Review. The PRT found no inconsistencies from the FMP for any of the states. The TC recommends the approval of state compliance reports and *de minimis* status for New Jersey and Delaware. New Jersey and Delaware requested *de minimis* status through the annual reporting process.

While Amendment 2 does not include a specific method to determine whether a state qualifies for *de minimis*, the PRT chose to evaluate an individual state's contribution to the fishery by comparing the two-year average of total landings of that state to that of the management unit. New Jersey and Delaware each fit this *de minimis* criteria.

De minimis doesn't exempt either state from any requirement, but may exempt them in the future for management issues, implemented through addenda to Amendment 2. The PRT also met and revised the research recommendation section for red drum. They picked four key goals that they thought the Board should be informed of in research needs.

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One such is the continued collection of length composition and age data, if possible, to better inform recreational discards for red drum. Collecting critical adult red drum data, including continued sampling and expansion of adult red drum surveys, as well as additional data on abundance, size, age, sex composition, and maturity of adults, as well as senescence in female red drum, and the impacts of the catch and release fishery on adult red drum stocks.

They also want to highlight the effects of the environmental factors on stock density and year class strength, and encourage the support and continued research to evaluate the social and economic value of this very important, and primarily recreational fishery. With that I'm going to move into the Atlantic Croaker Fishery Management Plan Review.

This graph here shows total commercial and recreational landings. Total Atlantic croaker harvest from New Jersey through the east coast of Florida in 2020 is estimated at 5 million pounds, which is a 30 percent increase from 2019. The commercial and recreational fisheries harvested 16 percent and 83 percent respectively.

This total represents a large shift from the previous ten-year average split, where traditionally commercial has previously been 52 percent and recreational 47 percent. In 2020, landings are estimated to be about 10.6 million fish or 4.1 million pounds, which is a 91 percent increase in the number of fish, and 121 percent increase in fish weight. Virginia was responsible for the majority of 2020 recreational landings in numbers of fish, followed by Florida. It is important to note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some MRIP data was imputed to fill in missing data, and the percent of imputed data ranged from 0 percent up to 70 percent, depending on the state. In 2020, anglers released 31.7 million fish, which you can see here on the black line.

Landings and live releases are indicated in the blue and red bars. Anglers released an estimated 75 percent of their recreational Atlantic croaker catch,

which is slightly down from the highest ever recorded in the time series in 2019. The PRT met and found no inconsistencies among states, with regard to the FMP requirements.

The TC recommends approval of state compliance reports and *de minimis* status. New Jersey, Delaware, South Carolina, and Georgia applied for *de minimis* status for their commercial fishery. New Jersey and Delaware applied for *de minimis* status for their recreational fisheries. Just a reminder that *de minimis* for Atlantic croaker is by fishery and not combined.

There are additional research and monitoring recommendations found in the FMP review document. The PRT really wanted to highlight to the Board that continued and new research into the impacts of climate change on the range of the species is a high priority. For Atlantic croaker, Florida realized in their *de minimis* review process that they no longer qualified for *de minimis* as they historically have been for commercial Atlantic croaker.

Seeing this, they went ahead and submitted a state implementation plan to be in compliance with Addendum III. A copy of the implementation plan was included in supplementary materials. The TC did meet to review it, and found it to be technically sound, and recommended it for approval. Their proposal was for a commercial vessel limit of 1,200 pounds in state waters, which is projected to reduce 10-year average by 1.6 percent. With that I'm happy to take any questions.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Great, thank you, Savannah. It's good to give your voice a little rest. Are there any questions for Savannah on these items, before we move to action? Does anybody have a question?

MS. KERNS: I have Pat Geer followed by Marty Gary, and then Roy Miller.

MR. GEER: Savannah, I just was curious. I don't know if I missed it or not. Are there any studies that have recreational discard mortality rates for croaker?

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MS. LEWIS: I'll have to double check the report. I believe they're in there. I don't know if I included it in the presentation, but I will double check for you, if you give me just a second.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, and so I'll move on to Marty for questions, while Savannah is checking that out. Marty, go ahead.

MR MARTIN GARY: Savannah, hopefully these are softball questions for you. On red drum, I might have totally missed it, but the geographic demarcation for the northern and southern region. Is that the North Carolina/Virginia border? I was wondering where that is. That was my first question, and then a quick follow if I could. I don't know if it's a reach, based on what you're presenting today, but just curious about. It looks like the numbers on the landings for the northern region, if you fit a line to it, they've gone up quite a bit, and I was just wondering if that might be speculated to be a function of range expansion from climate change. You know, if the FMP Review doesn't really shed light on it that's fine. We can wait until the appropriate time with an assessment for that kind of question.

MS. KERNS: Lynn and Savannah, Adam Kenyon does have his hand up if you need to phone a friend for some help with these, Savannah.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you, Toni, I really appreciate that. Hopefully my voice will hold out. Again, I apologize, I've got a summer cold going on. Pat, I'll get to your question. We don't calculate discard rates within the report, but we do have discard rates from the Observer Program that you've seen in the shrimp trawl estimates. It is in the report, and they range from 7 to 8 percent annually, according to the 2010 assessment.

MR. GEER: Okay, thanks, Savannah. Hope you feel better.

MS. LEWIS: Thanks, if you have more questions, we can always chat later after, when I hopefully have a voice.

CHAIR FEGLEY: I was just going to say, if you wanted to go to Adam and give your voice a rest, but if you've got Marty's question covered, go for it.

MS. LEWIS: I do, and I believe I covered. You might have to remind me, if I remember. But the demarcation for the northern region versus the southern region is actually the Carolinas, North Carolina and South Carolina. Then what was your second question, Marty? I apologize.

MR. GARY: Yes, it was just, and maybe it's not the right time for this question, but has there been any discussion. Looking at those landings in the northern region, it looks like they have a pretty significant increase over time. I was just wondering; this is a species that there may be some range expansion going on with it related to climate change. Again, maybe that's a question for a different scenario.

MS. LEWIS: Yes, that's an excellent question, Marty. Currently we're working through the stock assessment, so that might provide some more information. We'll hear from Jeff next. But I definitely think it's an important thing to keep in mind as a consideration for more than just the red drum.

MR. GARY: Okay thank you, and thank you for a great presentation. I'm sorry to test your voice.

MS. LEWIS: That's all right, thanks, Marty.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thanks for that, Savannah, moving on to Roy Miller.

MR. ROY W. MILLER: A quick question, Savannah, if I may, and perhaps Lynn would know it, if you don't off the top of your head. Under the *de minimis* definition for Atlantic croaker, New Jersey and Delaware, if approved, would be exempt from the 30 fish creel limit. Am I right in that? I guess the same question applies to spot while we're on the topic of *de minimis*.

MS. LEWIS: Hey Roy, I can answer that one. That is correct. Currently under Addendum III, when the

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TLA is triggered at 30 percent, states that have been granted *de minimis* are not required to implement the management measures. However, if the TLA does trip at 60 percent, then all states are required to implement measures, including *de minimis* states.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Yes, that is the difference, is that as long as we're at that moderate concern, the *de minimis* states don't move. But if we get into that 60 percent area, then yes, everybody is on the hook, no pun intended. Any more questions?

MS. KERNS: Chris Batsavage.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Go ahead, Chris.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Thank you, Savannah for the presentation. I have a question on research recommendations for croaker. First to Marty's point, with the increased landings in the northern region in 2020. I think part of that might have been the result of the strong 2018-year class that worked its way into the slot limit in 2020.

However, with the trend over the last few years, with some stronger year classes, climate change might be playing a role in that. I guess you had the simulation model for the assessment, and the assessment after that may shed some light on that. Regarding research recommendations for croaker, has the Technical Committee talked about the possibility of natural mortality changing for croaker over time?

Thinking about, you know we've seen some good juvenile abundance indices for croaker over the last several years, but the adult indices are staying really low, and landings are at their lowest level. I didn't know if that was something that the TC has talked about in any meetings, or is that something that might be explored for the next stock assessment?

MS. LEWIS: Hey Chris that is a great question. It is something up to this point at least, since I have been with the Commission, that we have not discussed looking into. I think it's an important area of something that the TC should probably start

thinking about as well. That's kind of one of the recommendations from the PRT, and why they wanted to look into climate impacts, perhaps on the range of the species, for why we're seeing some significant shift. It's something that I think we will be looking into in the future.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Yes, that was a good question, Chris, and just to follow up on that a little bit. When is the next crack at an assessment for spot and croaker, if you could remind the Board that would be great?

MS. LEWIS: Let me pull that up, because the date did change last year. Jeff and Kristen, if you know off the top of your heads, feel free to chime in.

MR. KIPP: Yes, Savannah, this is Jeff, I could chime in. It's 2024 for both spot and croaker.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, that's excellent, thank you. Okay, any other questions?

MS. KERNS: I don't see any hands, Lynn.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, all right, well thank you, Savannah for that. I think we need action on this, and I think what I would like to do is split this in two. Savannah, do you have a presentation on the implementation plan for Florida? Do you want to tackle the FMP Review compliance first, and then move on to Florida?

MS. LEWIS: Yes, let's do that first, and then we'll hop to Florida.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, so I'll be looking for a motion if somebody has it, to approve the fishery management plan reviews for croaker and drum, and the state compliance, as well as the request for *de minimis*. If I've got a commissioner out there who would be willing to make that motion, it would be greatly appreciated.

MS. KERNS: I've got Joe Cimino.

CHAIR FEGLEY: All right, Joe Cimino, go ahead.

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MR. JOE CIMINO: There is a double dipper in the *de minimis* world here. Let's see if I can do this. Well, we'll do it one species at a time, looks like. **Move to approve the Atlantic Croaker FMP review for the 2020 fishing year and state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status requests for New Jersey, Delaware, South Carolina and Georgia.**

CHAIR FEGLEY: All right, is there a second?

MS. KERNS: I have Mel Bell.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Excellent, thank you, Mel, for that. Okay, and I'll just ask really quick, does anybody want to discuss this motion? If you want to discuss this motion, raise your hand.

MS. KERNS: I have no hands.

CHAIR FEGLEY: All right, seeing none, I'm going to read it into the record. We're going to move to approve the Atlantic croaker FMP review for the 2020 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status request from New Jersey, Delaware, South Carolina and Georgia. Motion by Mr. Cimino, second by Mr. Bell. Is there any opposition to this motion? If you oppose, please raise your hand.

MS. KERNS: There are no hands, Lynn.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Excellent, so there we can cross croaker off the list. Let's move on to red drum. Joe, do you have a motion for that one as well?

MS. TINA L. BERGER: Hey Lynn, just a formality, you need to say that motion was approved.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Ah yes, thank you, Tina. **The motion on croaker to approve the compliance reports, FMP review, state compliance and *de minimis* request for croaker was approved by unanimous consent. Moving on, we have a motion that is the same for red drum, and who is our motion maker on this one?**

MS. KERNS: I've got Joe again.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Excellent, and do we have a second?

MS. KERNS: Mel Bell again.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, and I'll just ask for the record if there is anybody who cares to discuss this. If you do, raise your hand.

MS. KERNS: I see no opposition.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, so we are going to move to approve the Red Drum FMP Review for the 2020 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* status for New Jersey and Delaware. Motion by Mr. Cimino, second by Mr. Bell. If there is any opposition, please raise your hand.

MS. KERNS: No opposition.

CHAIR FEGLEY: **Thanks, the motion is approved by consent.** With that, I think that leads us to move along to Florida has submitted an Implementation Plan for its commercial Atlantic croaker fishery, so we're going to hear a little bit about that, and then take action on that. Savannah, back to you.

**CONSIDER STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FROM
FLORIDA FOR ITS COMMERCIAL ATLANTIC
CROAKER FISHERY**

MS. LEWIS: I'll just review. Florida has qualified for *de minimis* historically for their commercial Atlantic croaker fishery. However, they no longer qualify for *de minimis*, and so trying to get ahead of it, they did submit a state implementation plan, so that they are in compliance with Addendum III, once that *de minimis* status falls off after 2021.

The Technical Committee did meet to review it, and found it to be technically sound, and recommended approval. It follows the same methodology as was done for their spot commercial fishery. They would like to do a commercial vessel limit of 1,200 pounds in state waters, and this is projected to reduce the 10-year average by 1.06 percent, so it meets the criteria. Today we just need to vote on whether to

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approve or disapprove the State Implementation Plan for Florida.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thank you, Savannah, does anybody have any questions for Savannah, or for the Florida delegation about this plan?

MS. KERNS: Two questions, Pat Geer and Chris Batsavage.

MR. GEER: No, I was just going to make a motion. I can wait until Chris asks his question.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Excellent, Chris, do you have a question, or were you also going to make a motion?

MR. BATSAVAGE: I have a question, Madam Chair. I can't remember from the memo in the briefing material, but if this is approved, when does Florida expect to implement these management measures?

MS. LEWIS: I can answer that for you, or Erika has her hand up, I will let her speak for Florida.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Go ahead, Erika.

MS. ERIKA BURGESS: Savannah, thank you for presenting this today. Chris, our plan is to bring it forward to our Commission in October, and so it will go into effect, likely around December of 2021, so we'll have these rules take effect within the 2021 calendar year, and I'm happy to answer other questions that you may have.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Okay, thank you, Erika. Are there any other questions for Erika or for staff?

MS. KERNS: I have no other hands, Madam Chair.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Great, so Pat Geer, I believe that you are up.

MR. GEER: Move to approve the Atlantic croaker state implementation plan for Florida.

MS. KERNS: Second by Spud Woodward.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thank you, Spud. Okay, so I'm going to read this into the record, and then just immediately call the question. This is a motion to approve the Atlantic croaker state implementation plan from Florida, motion by Mr. Geer, second by Mr. Woodward. Is there any opposition? If so, please raise your hand.

MS. KERNS: I have no hands raised in opposition.

CHAIR FEGLEY: **Excellent, so this is approved by unanimous consent, and I thank everyone for that.** I really thank you too, staff, for your excellent presentations and work, and getting us through these agenda items so efficiently.

UPDATE ON THE RED DRUM MODELING PROCESS AND THE 2022 SIMULATION STOCK ASSESSMENT

CHAIR FEGLEY: With that we'll move on to the next one, which is to get an Update on the Red Drum Modeling Process and the 2022 Simulation Stock Assessment from Jeff Kipp. I'm personally really looking forward to seeing the results of this project. I think it's pretty creative and pretty exciting. Go ahead, Jeff.

MR. KIPP: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just as a reminder, the objective of this simulation assessment we're working on now, is to evaluate the performance of candidate assessment approaches, to guide future benchmark assessments of red drum, including the next benchmark assessment that is scheduled to start, following Board review of the simulation assessment and peer review. This subsequent benchmark assessment is scheduled to be finalized and peer reviewed through the SEDAR process in 2024.

Just to address Marty Gary's earlier question on potential range expansion of red drum. Those types of questions are more likely to be tackled during this subsequent benchmark assessment, when we'll be shifting focus from these simulated datasets that we're working with now, to the observed datasets that are collected through the monitoring programs, and grappling with standard terms of

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references, like stock structure, that come on in traditional stock assessments. I just thought I would throw that in there to address that question.

But since my last update to the Board at the meeting in March of this year, the Stock Assessment Subcommittee has continued meeting biweekly to review progress, and provide feedback, mostly on generating estimates from our three candidate assessment approaches we're evaluating here. Those are the statistical catch at age model that's been used in previous red drum assessments.

A stock synthesis integrated model that uses both length-structured in and age-structured data, and then also a traffic light analysis, which we've been discussing quite a bit here today. This work has been progressing well, and we're planning some initial review of performance of these three assessment methods during our next progress call, which is Wednesday, next week. We have also scheduled our last workshop of this process.

That was scheduled for October 4 through 7, and to be determined yet whether it will be in-person or virtual, like most of our other meetings, or all of our other meetings have been for this assessment process. But during that assessment workshop, we'll be working to wrap up most of the review of the performance results for each of these three assessment approaches, and to make some recommendations on assessment methods for red drum moving forward, to again guide some of these future benchmark assessments for red drum.

We anticipate having the simulation assessment peer reviewed in March of 2022, and presented to the Board at the spring meeting in May of 2022. I also just wanted to take this opportunity to thank Thom Tears, who was previously with North Carolina DMF. Tom was a Stock Assessment Subcommittee member that accepted a new position in New Caledonia.

But he was instrumental in getting the TLA or evaluating, developed before he moved on, which was a big endeavor, basically developing a TLA from scratch for red drum, which we hadn't done

previously. That concludes my update, and I can take any questions on the simulation assessment.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Great, thank you, Jeff. Are there any questions from the Board?

MS. KERNS: I don't see any hands, Lynn.

MS. KERNS: I guess I should say that everybody's presentations have been so thorough that the Board has no questions, not that they've necessarily stumped them.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Well, yes, and thank you again, Jeff, and to everyone for the C for crystal clear presentations.

ELECT VICE-CHAIR

CHAIR FEGLEY: I think though, before we adjourn, we have one other order of business, which is to nominate and elect a Vice-chair, and I'm looking for somebody who may have a motion on this.

MS. KERNS: I have John Clark.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Thank you, John Clark, go ahead.

MR. JOHN CLARK: I'm honored to nominate for Vice-chair, our esteemed colleague from the tar heel state, Mr. Chris Batsavage.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Excellent, and I guess, is that the motion? Do we need a second for that, or do I ask, yes, do I have a second for this motion?

MS. KERNS: Pat Geer.

CHAIR FEGLEY: Very good, and I'm sure there is no need to discuss this, so I'll call the question. It is a motion to nominate Chris Batsavage as Vice-chair of the Sciaenids Management Board, motion by Mr. Clark, second by Pat Geer. Is there any opposition to this motion?

MS. KERNS: I have no hands.

CHAIR FEGLEY: **All right, seeing none, congratulations,** Chris, that's excellent.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR FEGLEY: All right, well with that it looks like we're going to get about 45 minutes of our afternoon back, and I want to thank everybody for your attention. I really want to thank staff and our TC representatives for all of their work, and I'm going to take my prerogative as Chair to call this meeting adjourned, and wish you all an excellent evening.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. on
Tuesday, August 3, 2021)