

Frequently Asked Questions about the 2010 South Atlantic Red Snapper Stock Assessment (SEDAR 24)

1. When was SEDAR 24 conducted/completed?

- SEDAR 24 began with a data workshop held May 24-28, 2010.
- Following the data workshop, a series of 10 webinars were held between June 18 and September 21, 2010, to develop and run the assessment model.
- The interdependent review of the red snapper data and assessment was held October 12-14, 2010.
- The [final report](#) was completed and made available on the [SEDAR website](#) on October 25, 2010.

2. Where did the SEDAR 24 workshops occur?

- The data workshop was held in Charleston, South Carolina.
- The assessment webinar was held via internet-based webinars, so participants could participate from any location.
- The review workshop was held in Savannah, Georgia.

3. Who was invited to the SEDAR 24 workshops? Who participated?

- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council appointed participants to each of the three SEDAR 24 workshops.
 - The appointed data workshop panel included NMFS analysts and data managers, fishermen, a fishing industry representative, representatives from most South Atlantic states who provided data or life history information, and South Atlantic Science and Statistical Committee (SSC) representatives.
 - The assessment panel consisted of NMFS analysts from the Southeast and from other regions, SSC representatives, several fishermen, and a fishing industry representative.
 - The appointed review panel contained three independent reviewers provided by the Center for Independent Experts (CIE), two SSC representatives, and three appointed fishermen observers.
- Not all invited participants were able to attend the workshops and webinars. The names and affiliations of individuals who attended each webinar or workshop is provided in the [final report](#), which is available to download at the [SEDAR website](#).
- Members of the public also were able to attend the workshops and log into the webinars as observers.

4. What were the various roles and responsibilities of participants?

- Appointed data workshop panelists were responsible for reviewing the available data and making recommendations about which data should be included and how. They also reviewed research on life history components such as maximum age, natural mortality, and reproduction and made recommendations on values to be used.
- Appointed assessment panelists used the data developed at the data workshop to build the assessment model and made decisions about assessment model configuration; for example, what should the model assume about fishery selectivity (the general size and age of fish encountered in the fishery). In general, those with the most experience in conducting stock assessments were the most active participants in the assessment. The fishermen on the panel were often asked to provide details on how or where the fishery operated.
- Appointed review panelists reviewed the decisions made by the data and assessment workshop panelists and provided their expert opinion about the validity of the assessment. Appointed fishermen observers watched the process and were available for any reviewer questions.

5. Prior to SEDAR 24, when was the last stock assessment conducted for red snapper and what were the results?

- The most recent stock assessment for red snapper was completed in February 2008 (SEDAR 15).
- SEDAR 15 indicated red snapper were overfished (biomass was too low) and were undergoing overfishing (current fishing rate was too high).

6. Why was South Atlantic red snapper reassessed so soon after SEDAR 15?

- The SEDAR Steering Committee requested SEDAR 24 be conducted to evaluate a potential strong year class that occurred since the SEDAR 15 assessment and to incorporate the results of extensive age sampling conducted in 2009.
- The new assessment also evaluated some of the key uncertainties from SEDAR 15, such as the historic landings levels, fishery selectivity, and discard mortality rates.

7. What were the major changes made to the SEDAR 24 assessment to address uncertainties in the SEDAR 15 assessment?

- Data were updated. Recent landings, length, and age data through 2009 were incorporated into the assessment.
- Historic recreational landings were recalculated using the ratio of recreational to commercial catches in numbers for years in which both were available to perform back calculations.
- An assumption was made that in the recreational sector older red snapper were less available to recreational fishing gear than younger fish (dome-shaped selectivity).

- Discard mortality estimates were based on a published relationship of discard mortality with depth. Release mortality was estimated as: 48%, commercial sector; 41%, for-hire sector; and 39%, private sector.
- 8. How did the results of SEDAR 24 differ from those of SEDAR 15?**
- The results of the two assessments are not different in terms of stock status. Both assessments indicate that red snapper are overfished and undergoing overfishing.
 - SEDAR 24 indicates the biomass of the red snapper stock has benefited from two recent strong recruitment years and that the stock, while still overfished, is in slightly better shape than what was predicted in SEDAR 15.
- 9. What were the key factors influencing these differences?**
- The stock benefitted from strong recruitment since the last assessment. This means a large number of new juvenile fish entered the fishable population.
 - SEDAR 24 also was improved by intensive age sampling that occurred after SEDAR 15 was completed, which provided better information on the population's current age composition.
- 10. How can red snapper be in such bad shape when fishermen are reporting the best fishing in many years?**
- A spike in 2007 discards and 2008-2009 landings indicates fishermen are seeing more fish now than in previous years. The spikes are due to strong year classes that occurred in 2006 and 2007.
 - Despite these recent spikes in discards and landings, there are not enough older fish in the population. Red snapper live to 54 years of age, but both SEDAR 15 and SEDAR 24 indicate that most red snapper are less than 10 years of age.
- 11. How will the results of SEDAR 24 be used?**
- Fishery managers will use the results of SEDAR 24 to inform decisions about how to manage red snapper.
 - Federal law requires managers to reduce fishing mortality to a level that ends overfishing and rebuilds the population.
 - Information on current management initiatives can be obtained from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries Service as follows:
 - South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Tel: 866-SAFMC-10; Web site: <http://www.safmc.net/>)
 - NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office (Tel: 727-824-5305; Web site: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/#>)
- 12. When is the next South Atlantic red snapper assessment scheduled?**
- South Atlantic red snapper is tentatively on the SEDAR schedule for 2013.

13. Where can I find a copy of the SEDAR 24 and SEDAR 15 reports? Can I get a hard copy mailed to me if I do not have access to a computer?

- All SEDAR reports are available on the SEDAR website at <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/>.
- Reports are filed by SEDAR cycle number.
- If you have trouble finding or downloading a document or wish to request a hard copy, please contact the SEDAR staff at 843-571-4366.