

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GROUND FISH REBUILDING PLAN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

The Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC's) Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses was developed by the SSC in 2001 and adopted by the Council in April 2001. This Terms of Reference has guided authors of groundfish rebuilding analyses, which are critical for developing rebuilding plans for overfished groundfish stocks. New rebuilding analyses for depleted groundfish species are anticipated later this year. The Council has decided these rebuilding analyses need to provide results that can be used to evaluate the adequacy of progress of adopted rebuilding plans, which is a Magnuson-Stevens Act mandate.

The SSC deliberated an evaluation methodology in March. However, in their March report to the Council, they indicated a recommendation for Council consideration may not be available by the April Council meeting Briefing Book deadline. The Council discussed the need for a modified Rebuilding Analysis Terms of Reference before the June Council meeting, since development of rebuilding analyses will begin prior to then, and the Terms of Reference is needed to update instructions to authors of these analyses. The Council subsequently instructed the SSC to develop a new Terms of Reference before the June Council meeting and include both updated modeling specifications and the elements requested by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) (Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 1).

The Council task for this agenda item is to adopt a final Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses that includes the methodology for evaluating rebuilding plan progress, as well as the estimates and projections requested by the GMT.

### **Council Action:**

**Adopt a final Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Plan Analytical Review.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 1: March 2005 Groundfish Management Team Report on Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Plan Review.

### **Agenda Order:**

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. SSC Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Plan Analytical Review

John DeVore  
Kevin Hill

PFMC  
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## GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GROUND FISH REBUILDING PLAN REVIEW

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the draft Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses, as well as the other attachments for this agenda item, and offers the following comments. The GMT reiterates its request to mandate the inclusion of the following estimates and projections in the Terms of Reference for future rebuilding analyses:

- Estimate of  $P_{MAX}$  ( $P\{\text{rebuilding by } T_{MAX}\}$ ) at  $F = 0$ .
- Ten-year acceptable biological catch (ABC)/optimum yield (OY) projections and estimates of the  $F$  rate (both SPR and  $F$ ) and  $T_{MAX}$  under rebuilding likelihoods ranging from  $P_{MAX} = 0.5$  to the  $P_{MAX}$  under  $F = 0$  (at 10 percentile increments).
- Decision table for all equally plausible assessment/rebuilding models.
- Date of data extraction.

The GMT would also desire to see a regional stratification of the ABC/OY projections if the assessment indicates regional differences in the population dynamics or stock structure of the species. This will enable specification of regional OYs or harvest guidelines and/or regionally variant management measures. The GMT considers this management approach critical to avoid potential problems of localized depletion, geographic concentration of fishing effort, and risks to a stock's age and genetic structure.

Finally, the GMT reviewed "Establishing Quantitative Criteria for Assessing Adequacy of Progress Towards Rebuilding Overfished West Coast Groundfish Stocks (Agenda Item F.3.b, Attachment 1) and "Evaluating Alternative Rebuilding Revision Rules for Assessing Progress Towards Rebuilding of Overfished West Coast Groundfish" (Agenda Item F.3.b, Attachment 2). The first issue paper describes the recommended analyses for evaluating adequacy of an existing rebuilding plan, which focuses on changes in  $P_{MAX}$  and the SPR harvest rate relative to the original rebuilding plan. Given the relative scale of the groundfish rebuilding framework and how many different assessment parameters can have a major effect on our understanding current stock status, the GMT believes this is a sensible approach for evaluating rebuilding progress. Therefore, the GMT recommends the evaluation "tool" described in the first paper be adopted and incorporated in the SSC Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses at the April Council meeting.

The second issue paper concerns policy choices (termed "revision rules") for modifying rebuilding plans once an evaluation of rebuilding progress is done in a rebuilding analysis. The complexity of potential effects of each of these policy choices is explored in this paper. The GMT would like more time to better understand these dynamics. The GMT recommends that the revision rules described in the second paper take a longer, more deliberative pathway to

adoption. It is recommended that the Council adopt revision rules at the September or November 2005 Council meetings prior to adopting the range of 2007-2008 harvest specifications. It would also benefit the process if a joint session on these alternative revision rules were scheduled for the April or June Council meeting to foster a clearer understanding of the implications of these policy choices.

### **Summary of GMT Recommendations**

1. Include the estimates and projections listed above in the Terms of Reference for future rebuilding analysis
2. Consider regional stratification of ABC/OY projections in future rebuilding analysis where differences in population dynamics or stock structure are apparent.
3. Adopt the evaluation approach for assessing the adequacy of rebuilding plans described in Agenda Item F.3.b
4. Hold a joint session on alternative rebuilding plan revision rules at the April or June Council meetings.