The Northwest Fisheries Science Center is committed to organizing and coordinating a successful STAR panel process for west coast groundfish. We believe that it is important to adhere to the recommendations from the January 2006 Groundfish Stock Assessment Review Workshop. Those recommendations included:

- “Limit the number of full assessments to a maximum of 8-10.”
- “Identify which assessments should be full and which should be updates when recommending an assessment for the next cycle. Also provide the rationale for these recommendations.”
- “Attempt to schedule only 2 full assessment reviews per STAR panel.”
- “More discipline needed in reviews to ensure assessments comply with the Terms of Reference (i.e., updates need to comply by not entertaining new models).”

With regard to assessment updates, the Terms of Reference state, “To qualify [as an update], a stock assessment must carry forward its fundamental structure from a model that was previously reviewed and endorsed by a STAR panel… In practice there will always be valid reasons for altering a model, … although, in the interests of stability, such changes should be resisted as much as possible. Instead, significant alterations should be addressed in the next subsequent full assessment and review.”

We also believe that it is very important to reserve a panel meeting near the end of the review cycle to serve as a “mop-up” panel. The goal of the mop-up panel is to provide a last opportunity for assessment efforts to yield management advice in cases where the scheduled STAR panel cannot endorse an assessment by the close of the meeting and where additional analysis can address panel concerns. The mop-up panel in 2005 was fully utilized to provide a final review of three assessments that were initially presented in earlier STAR panels. We intend to plan on the mop-up panel being similarly subscribed in 2007.

In order to complete review of the species on the current list of full assessments for 2007, seven STAR panels would be needed, including the U.S.–Canadian Joint Panel for Pacific hake/whiting, five STAR panels, and a mop-up panel.

The draft 2007 groundfish STAR panel schedule (shown below) was developed using the following criteria:

1) Reviews of full assessments are scheduled last if authors are also conducting update assessments earlier in the process;
2) STAR panels are not scheduled within one week before or after a Council meeting or during a holiday week;
3) The first STAR Panel is scheduled in May so that analysts have adequate time to incorporate the most recent year of data into the assessment (some data will not be ready until early to mid-March);
3) The last STAR panel is scheduled for the beginning of August to provide at least two weeks after the STAR panel to finalize the assessment and STAR panel reports for inclusion in the September briefing book;
4) The mop-up panel is scheduled after the September Council meeting, in the event the SSC recommends an assessment be sent to the mop-up panel and before the November Council meeting, so post-mop-up assessments and panel reports can be included in the November briefing book.

Table 1. Tentative 2007 Groundfish STAR Panel Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species 1</th>
<th>Species 2</th>
<th>Proposed Location</th>
<th>Proposed Dates (2007)</th>
<th>Lead Author Species 1</th>
<th>Lead Author Species 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US – Canadian Joint Panel</td>
<td>Pacific hake/whiting</td>
<td>Silver Cloud Hotel</td>
<td>Feb 5-9</td>
<td>Tom Helser and Steve Martell</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR Panel #1</td>
<td>black rockfish</td>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>May 7-11</td>
<td>David Sampson</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR Panel #2</td>
<td>bocaccio</td>
<td>Santa Cruz, CA</td>
<td>May 14-18 or May 21-25</td>
<td>Alec MacCall</td>
<td>John Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR Panel #3</td>
<td>skates</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>June 25-29</td>
<td>Vlada Gertseva</td>
<td>Theresa Tsou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR Panel #4</td>
<td>darkblotched rockfish</td>
<td>Newport, OR</td>
<td>July 16-20</td>
<td>Owen Hamel</td>
<td>Michael Schirripa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR Panel #5</td>
<td>canary rockfish</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>July 30-Aug 3</td>
<td>Ian Stewart</td>
<td>Isaac Kaplan and Tom Helser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mop-Up</td>
<td>If needed</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>Oct 1-5</td>
<td>If needed</td>
<td>If needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>