

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON GROUND FISH STOCK
ASSESSMENTS FOR 2007

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the draft plan for Groundfish Stock Assessments for 2007 and discussed several proposed changes to the schedule.

Cowcod: Dr. Steve Ralston noted that an improved time series of historic catch data are now available for cowcod. Additionally, it was noted that there was an error in the way selectivity was modeled in the previous assessment. Since changes in catch data and the correction of errors are permitted under the Terms of Reference, the SSC agrees that this assessment should proceed as an update.

Blue Rockfish: Mr. Tom Barnes stated the California Department of Fish and Game is prepared to conduct a stock assessment for blue rockfish. The SSC noted that the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel process for 2007 can accommodate an additional species in the schedule. Preliminary evidence suggests that blue rockfish may be two separate species. The SSC recommends proceeding with a stock assessment to summarize existing information and to evaluate stock status.

Black Rockfish: In lieu of conducting a spiny dogfish stock assessment, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has offered to conduct an assessment of the northern stock of black rockfish. The SSC recommends that this assessment, the black rockfish assessment by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the blue rockfish assessment should be reviewed together. Similarities in biology and catch statistics will result in an improved STAR Panel review if these assessments are reviewed jointly.

Widow Rockfish/English Sole: At the recent Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) Trawl Survey Workshop it was decided that combining the historical triennial trawl survey time series and the new NWFSC trawl survey time series would not be permitted for stock assessment updates. Should an assessment author wish to pursue combining data from the two sources, the burden of proof will reside with the author to demonstrate the validity of the pooled index in a full stock assessment. In the case of widow rockfish and English sole, the assessments are not expected to use the NWFSC shelf trawl survey data, and thus they will both continue to qualify as updates.

Yelloweye Rockfish: The SSC recommends that the yelloweye rockfish stock assessment continues to be conducted as an update. After discussing the WDFW concern related to yelloweye rockfish at the September Council meeting, the SSC concluded that it would be inappropriate to incorporate the catch per unit of effort (CPUE) time series that included Pacific halibut trips in an updated assessment. Specifically, the recently adopted Terms of Reference for Groundfish Stock Assessments stipulates that 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.” Instead, as a potential solution to this problem, it was decided that the Stock Assessment Team should proceed by: (1) preparing a stock assessment update that adheres to the existing Terms of Reference, (2) conducting sensitivity runs of the base model that

incorporate altered time series of CPUE and catch, and (3) presenting those findings to the SSC groundfish subcommittee during its review of stock assessment updates. Depending on the results of the sensitivity run, as well as on whatever other competing demands arise during the course of the five STAR Panels that are planned for the spring/summer of 2007, the groundfish sub-committee may elect to refer the issue to the “mop-up” panel for more thorough evaluation.

The SSC also discussed the concern that the groundfish subcommittee meeting to review updated assessments, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday during the week of the June, 2007 Council meeting, may not facilitate advisory body participation. The SSC is open to discussing an altered schedule for the updated assessment review to accommodate this concern. Additionally, the review of rebuilding analyses should be scheduled at a time that will permit advisory body participation. This activity could potentially be scheduled to occur during the “mop-up” STAR Panel tentatively scheduled for October, 2007.

The following tables summarize the recommended stocks for assessment, and a proposed STAR Panel schedule:

Revised List of Stocks Scheduled for Full Assessment	Lead Agency	Stocks Scheduled for Updated Assessment	Lead Agency
Bocaccio	SWFSC	Cowcod	SWFSC
Canary Rockfish	NWFSC	Widow Rockfish	SWFSC
Chilipepper Rockfish	SWFSC	Yelloweye Rockfish	NWFSC
Arrowtooth Flounder	NWFSC	Pacific Ocean Perch	NWFSC
Darkblotched Rockfish	NWFSC	English Sole	NWFSC
Sablefish	NWFSC		
Black Rockfish (South)	ODFW		
Black Rockfish (North)	WDFW		
Longnose Skate	NWFSC		
Spiny Dogfish	WDFW		
Blue Rockfish (South)	CDFG		
Pacific Whiting	NWFSC/CDFO		

Revised 2007 Groundfish STAR Panel Schedule as Discussed by the SSC

	Species 1	Species 2	Proposed Location	Proposed Dates (2007)	Lead Author Species 1	Lead Author Species 2
US – Canada Joint Panel	Pacific Hake/Whiting	NA	Seattle, WA Silver Cloud Hotel	Feb 5-9	Tom Helser and Steve Martell	NA
STAR Panel #1	Skates	Sablefish	Newport, OR	May 7-11	Vlada Gertseva	Michael Schirripa
STAR Panel #2	Black Rockfish(N&S)	Blue Rockfish	Portland, OR	May 21-25	David Sampson(S) Theresa Tsou (N)	Meisha Key
STAR Panel #3	Bocaccio	Chilipepper rockfish	Santa Cruz, CA	June 25-29	Alec MacCall Steve Ralston	John Field
STAR Panel #4	Darkblotched Rockfish		Seattle, WA	July 16-20	Owen Hamel	
STAR Panel #5	Canary Rockfish	Arrowtooth Flounder	Seattle, WA	July 30-Aug 3	Ian Stewart	Isaac Kaplan & Tom Helser
Mop-Up	If needed	If needed	Seattle, WA	Oct 1-5		