

Public Comment by Steven Barrager Ph. D., on Stock Assessment Planning 2011-2012

I recommend that the Council develop a normative framework for making total allowable catch, stock assessment and information collection decisions. The costs and benefits of raising or lowering catch limits should be considered in the framework (preferably expressed in dollars) along with the uncertainties in fish stock assessments. In developing this approach NMFS should rely on the extensive literature and experience related to the science and engineering of decisions under uncertainty.

Such a framework would improve the Council's decisions and would provide more defensible arguments. As a welcome side benefit it would prevent many unproductive discussions about the precautionary approach. A normative quantitative framework would enable us to talk in a constructive way about how much precaution is appropriate in each situation.

Anyone interested in learning more about normative decision making should consult the vast literature on decision analysis or Steve Barrager, GAP Conservation Seat

Development of this normative framework should have a high priority. It is not currently in the Research and Data plan.

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