

STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING FOR 2011-2012 GROUND FISH FISHERY
DECISION MAKING

In June, the Council adopted a terms of reference for groundfish rebuilding analysis in June, but deferred adoption of a terms of reference for next year's groundfish stock assessment and review process until the September Council meeting (the draft stock assessment and review terms of reference provided in June is again provided as Agenda Item I.5.a, Attachment 1). One pending issue was the resolution of the number and qualifications of reviewers at Stock Assessment Review (STAR) panels. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommended four reviewers at STAR panels that review two full assessments (i.e., N+2 reviewers per STAR panel, where N = the number of full assessments reviewed at a STAR panel) while the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) recommended three reviewers per STAR panel, citing cost as an issue. Further, the SSC recommended at least two reviewers with west coast groundfish experience formally attend next year's STAR panels. Another pending matter was the Council request for a new section in the stock assessment and review terms of reference defining the content and use of data reports, as opposed to full stock assessments, for management decision-making (see proposed language defining the content and use of data reports in Agenda Item I.5.a, Attachment 2). Lastly, Council staff has proposed edits to the initial section of the Terms of Reference, to clarify the roles of Council staff and NMFS staff in the process in accordance with the relevant sections in the Magnuson Stevens Reauthorization Act (MSRA), guidance described in the recent proposed rule on annual catch limits, and peer review function implementation discussions between the West Coast NMFS Science Centers and the Council Chairman and Executive Director; notably, the Council has received specific funding for an enhanced peer review process, including increased responsibilities for Council staff (see Agenda Item I.5.a, Supplemental Attachment 4).

The Council also adopted a list of nine groundfish stocks to be assessed next year, which will be used to decide the harvest specifications and management measures for 2011 and 2012 groundfish fisheries. With five STAR panels anticipated next year and a limit of two full assessments to be reviewed at each STAR panel, there is the capacity for one more full assessment. Two candidate stocks for a full assessment are bronzespotted and greenspotted rockfish. The SSC intends to recommend one or none of these two stocks for a full assessment next year pending evaluation of available data to inform an assessment. The Council scheduled this recommendation to be provided at the September Council meeting. At the September meeting, the Council will consider the approval of a 2009 STAR panel meeting schedule (Agenda Item 1.5.a, Attachment 3).

The Council is tasked at this meeting with final adoption of a terms of reference for the groundfish stock assessment and review process for 2009-2010; designating either bronzespotted or greenspotted rockfish for a full assessment; and providing guidance on a schedule of STAR panels to review new full assessments (the SSC will review updated assessments). The Council should consider advice from the NMFS science centers, advisory bodies, and the public before making these decisions.

Council Action:

1. **Adopt a Final Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2009-2010.**
2. **Consider a full assessment for either or neither bronzespotted or greenspotted rockfish.**
3. **Provide guidance on a schedule of STAR panel meetings for next year.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item I.5.a, Attachment 1: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2009-2010. (This draft contains the edits as presented at the June, 2008 Council meeting in Foster City, California.)
2. Agenda Item I.5.a, Attachment 2: Proposed language for the draft terms of reference (Attachment 1) defining the content and use of data reports in future management decision-making.
3. Agenda Item I.5.a, Attachment 3: Draft proposed 2009 STAR Panel schedule.
4. Agenda Item I.5.a, Supplemental Attachment 4: Proposed language for the draft terms of reference (Attachment 1) refining the roles and responsibilities of Council staff and NMFS staff.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
 - b. NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center Recommendations
 - c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
 - d. Public Comment
 - e. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Stock Assessment Terms of Reference and Assessment Plan
- John DeVore
Elizabeth Clarke

PFMC
08/20/08