

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON UPDATE AND  
COMMUNICATION OF RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) developed recommendations to prioritize Research and Data Needs for Groundfish Management, and reviewed the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) and Salmon Technical Team (STT) comments on the Council's Update and Communication of Research and Data Needs Public Review Draft.

The SSC recommends adding a new section (3.2) to the Groundfish Management Research and Data Needs identifying the following priorities:

1. Continue to conduct annual comprehensive shelf and slope bottom trawl surveys of west coast groundfish.
2. Conduct port sampling for species composition and biological samples at levels needed to support stock assessment and management.
3. Evaluate feasibility of and develop as appropriate alternative survey methodologies for measuring abundance and distribution of groundfish. Develop a coastwide survey of rockfish populations in untrawlable areas.
4. Develop methods to assess and manage stocks for which data are not adequate to fit age-structured assessment models.
5. Develop and implement a coastwide multi-state system for electronic recording of fishticket information and fishery logbooks in consistent form.
6. Continue the evaluation of optimum yield (OY) control rules, biological reference points, spawner-recruit relationships and harvest policies used to make decisions about acceptable biological catch and harvest guideline/OY for groundfish.
7. Evaluate protocols and priorities for biological sampling (lengths and ageing structures) to ensure that sufficient data are being collected to support existing stock assessments and proposed new assessments.
8. Derive historical catch estimates which are consistent with the best available information and also consistent across species.
9. Conduct a Management Strategy Evaluation to evaluate the current 40-10 harvest control rule for Pacific whiting.
10. Establish accessible online databases for all data relevant to groundfish stock assessments.

The SSC reviewed the ONMS comments on the Council's Update and Communication of Research and Data Needs Public Review Draft and developed recommendations for how these comments should be incorporated into the Research and Data Needs. The SSC recommendations are provided as Attachment 1.

The SSC reviewed the STT comments on the Council's Update and Communication of Research and Data Needs Public Review Draft, and concurs with the STT comments except as noted below:

- Item 4.2.2 - Genetic Stock Identification (GSI). The SSC recommends that GSI remain a high research priority in the document but also recognizes the importance of the real-time management issues raised by the STT. To address the latter, the SSC recommends the addition of the following sentence to Section 4.2.2: "There is a research need for finer stock resolution with GSI to align stock identification with management units (such as discrimination between Klamath fall Chinook and Klamath spring Chinook)."
- Item 4.3 – Mass marking. The SSC recommends that the language referring to release mark rates be retained because mass marking is an ongoing management program.
- Item 4.4 – Genetics. The SSC does not recognize that basic escapement monitoring and double index tagging (DIT) are necessarily higher priority than GSI. The DIT recommendation should be added to 4.2.1 Mark Selective Fisheries.
- The SSC supports the remaining bullets recommended by the STT.

### SSC Item C.3. Attachment 1:

The SSC reviewed the ONMS comments on the Council's Update and Communication of Research and Data Needs Public Review Draft and developed recommendations for how these comments should be incorporated into the Research and Data Needs.

- 2.1 (p. 5), 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet: The SSC recommends adding *spawning habitat* to the sentence (but not *habitat models* or *active spawning habitat*).
- 2.2 (p. 6): The SSC has not reviewed the ONMS's suggested reference, and therefore concludes it would not be appropriate to recommend including the reference at this time.
- 2.2 (p. 6), 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet: The SSC recommends that the Council should consider adding the referenced 'Condition Reports'.
- 2.2 (p. 6), 5<sup>th</sup> bullet: The SSC recommends adding the following demarcation points: Pt. Reyes, San Francisco Bay, and Cape Alava.
- 2.3 (p. 7), 4<sup>th</sup> bullet: The SSC does not support adding the ONMS suggestion "ensure that adequate ground-truthing is conducted to test the models." The SSC does not consider full ground-truthing of those models currently feasible.
- 3.2.3 (p. 12), 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet: The SSC concurs with ONMS suggestion to add reference to collection of fish-association indices as well.
- 3.2.3 (p. 13), 1<sup>st</sup> bullet: The SSC notes that Section 3.4 Habitat Issues (p. 16-17) and Section 8.3 Essential Fish Habitat (p. 53) already covered this topic (gear damage to biogenic habitats), and does not recommend adding the ONMS suggested language to Section 3.2.3.
- 3.3 (p. 14), 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet: The bullet referred primarily to accessing raw data, and SSC does not agree with the ONMS recommendation to list the specific web-based programs for posting interpreted findings such as SIMoN.
- 3.4 (p. 16): In the first paragraph of 3.4 Habitat Issues, the SSC recommends adding the specific references for the "anecdotal" study (High 1998) and the "observational" study by the Monterey Bay NMS (Engel and Kvittek 1998). The SSC recommends modifying the first sentence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph as follows: "Field studies are needed on the effects of fishing on benthic habitats on the Pacific coast, where these have not yet been implemented."
- 5.1 (p. 27) 1<sup>st</sup> bullet: The SSC does not see the linkage between the ONMS references and CPS stock assessments; and does not recommend making the ONMS suggested changes.
- 5.2.1 (p. 29) 1<sup>st</sup> bullet: The ONMS suggestion to include studies of krill on various scales was already covered by 2.3 Emerging Issues for Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management.
- 8.3 (p. 53), 1<sup>st</sup> bullet: The SSC recommends modifying the first sentence of this bullet as follows: "Conduct experiments to assess the effects of various fishing gears on specific habitats, including habitat recovery rates, on the west coast and to develop methods to minimize those impacts as appropriate."
- ONMS recommended developing a matrix for issues and needs, cross-cutting FMPs and research topics. The SSC agrees such a matrix would be ultimately useful, but is beyond the scope for this document.

## References

Engel, J. and R. Kvitek. 1998. Effects of Otter Trawling on a Benthic Community in Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. *Conservation Biology* 12:1204-1214

High, W.L. 1998. Observations of a scientist/diver on fishing technology and fisheries biology. NOAA, NMFS, AFSC Processed Report 98-01. 47 p.