

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 23 – IMPLEMENTING ANNUAL CATCH LIMIT REQUIREMENTS

Mr. John DeVore briefed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on development of the Council's framework for implementing Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) under the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 23. Dr. Jim Hastie (NWFSC) also participated in the discussion.

The SSC provided a conceptual framework in April for incorporating scientific uncertainty in the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) rule for stocks with assessment models. Recommendations included quantifying assessment variability as a basis for evaluating the size of a scientific buffer (i.e., the difference in yield between the Overfishing Limit [OFL] and the ABC) and the risk of overfishing a stock.

The SSC proposes to convene a subgroup meeting this summer to scope approaches to quantify scientific buffers. The SSC notes that there are many challenges to developing a consistent analytical approach to characterize scientific uncertainty due to differences in data coverage and quality for assessed species (e.g., geographic boundaries, availability of age data, different time series). The scoping exercise would explore a number of possible approaches to incorporate scientific uncertainty in the ABC control rules, using data and parameter estimates from current and past stock assessments. Council staff would assist by assembling data and parameter estimates from past stock assessments. The SSC anticipates that the scoping exercise will be useful to identify preliminary ABC control rule alternatives for assessed species for Council consideration. A strategy for incorporating scientific uncertainty can be specified for the framework, but the SSC does not expect a full analysis for assessed species to be completed by November.

The SSC also discussed concepts in the Vulnerability Evaluation Work Group report (Agenda Item E.4.a., Attachment 1) on Productivity and Susceptibility Assessments (PSAs) to determine vulnerability of a stock. Stock vulnerability categorization methods, such as the PSA, will be needed for data poor species in particular. Dr. Jim Hastie stated that the NWFSC will be compiling trend data for unassessed stocks, but the compilation will not be completed by November. The SSC proposes to review the PSA methodology before the November meeting for use in the FMP Amendment 23 preliminary alternatives on ABC control rules.

The SSC also briefly discussed management uncertainty, and considered that the inseason management procedures currently employed by the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) are performing well. If documentation of the procedures is provided, the adequacy of current methodologies can be verified.