

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
ACOUSTIC TRAWL SURVEY METHODOLOGY REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

Dr. André Punt (SSC CPS subcommittee chair) summarized the proposed Terms of Reference for the January 2018 methodology review of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center's acoustic trawl survey methodology (ATM) for coastal pelagic species ([Agenda Item C.1, Attachment 1](#)). The methodology review panel will be focused on the approach used to develop biomass indices for Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, two sub-stocks of northern anchovy, and jack mackerel. This will be the second Council-sponsored methodology review for the ATM (the first was conducted in February 2011), and is needed to address the eight items in the proposed Terms of Reference.

All eight items in the proposed Terms of Reference are very important for interpreting and applying resulting biomass indices for CPS management. The SSC recommends lengthening the methodology review to 4.5 or 5 days to adequately address all eight items. Specific recommendations on review item changes or refinements include:

- Item 1 (documentation) and 8 (use for assessment) should both include an additional sub-item to address how echogram backscatter is analyzed to exclude non-CPS backscatter.
- Item 3 should focus on using the habitat model to select the region to be surveyed, whereas the use of the habitat model to split historical catches between the northern and southern subpopulations should be dealt with at STAR panels.
- Item 5 should not take up a large amount of time during the review. It should focus on summarizing the conclusions of workshops on comparing outputs from the EK60 and EK80 echo sounders.
- Item 8 essentially represents a synthesis of the other seven items, and thus will be the most relevant to the Council for understanding ATM survey use for CPS management. Item 8c should read “use the most recent estimate of absolute biomass to directly inform harvest management without the use of a formal integrated assessment.”

The SSC endorses the scope of the proposed ATM methodology review, including review report expectations and the breadth of the review topic items.