

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING FOR 2013-2014 MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the latest Terms of Reference (TOR) for Groundfish Stock Assessments and Review Panels (Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 1), the National Marine Fisheries Service Report (E.2.b, NMFS Report), and Draft Summary Minutes for the Yelloweye Rockfish Survey Design Workshop (Agenda Item E.2.a, Supplemental Attachment 3) under this agenda item and provides the following comments for Council consideration.

Terms of Reference

GMT Participation

The TOR states, “the STAT is expected to initiate contact with the GAP representative at an early stage in the process, keep the GAP representative informed of the data being used and be prepared to respond to concerns about the data that might be raised. The STAT Team should also contact the GMT representative for information about changes in fishing regulations that may influence data used in the assessment.” The GMT recommends modifying this language to state that the STAT team is also expected to initiate contact with the GMT representative and respond to any data issues that might be raised. The GMT also recommends that language be added to the TOR instructing assessment authors to forward data inputs (landings, indices, etc.), including source descriptions and geographic ranges, to GMT members with sufficient time for review and comments prior to distribution of the draft assessment to STAR Panel members. This would give assessment authors more time to incorporate state comments, edits, and ensure data accuracy.

National Standard 1 Considerations

In response to Amendment 23 the GMT may have additional modifications for the TOR in June (e.g., language on prioritizing stocks or reporting considerations to capture scientific uncertainty).

Proposed List of Species /STAR Panel Schedule Considerations

Prioritization of stocks

The potential schedule for STAR Panels is listed in Table 2 of the NMFS Report (Agenda Item E.2.b). The Panel proposed for June (Panel 2) has a vacancy with only a Pacific ocean perch (POP) assessment scheduled for review.

If the Council wishes to add new species to the list of assessments, the GMT identified the following species that could be at risk of overfishing based on life history characteristics: China, copper, quillback, rougheye, and shortraker rockfish. The Productivity and Susceptibility Analysis (PSA) scores for these species are highest of all those examined indicating they are more vulnerable to overexploitation. We also note that China, copper, and quillback rockfish are vulnerable to the nearshore fishery and may be useful as indicator stocks for the minor nearshore rockfish complexes. Likewise, rougheye or shortraker could serve as indicators for the minor slope complexes. They are also highly sought after in the marketplace.

Workshops

Pre-assessment workshops

In prior assessment cycles, pre-assessment workshops were held to gather input from industry and public. The pre-assessment workshops allowed broader discussion of input data and model structure. STAR Panel meetings are normally fully prescribed, not allowing for major changes/additions to data and modeling. The GMT recommends the use of the pre-assessment workshops as a tool to reduce the need for mop-up panels.

Yelloweye Survey Workshop

The GMT reviewed the Draft Summary Minutes for the Yelloweye Rockfish Survey Design Workshop (Agenda Item E.2.a, Supplemental Attachment 3). The GMT agrees with the workshop participants' recommendation to create an ad-hoc committee tasked with developing a non-extractive yelloweye rockfish survey. The GMT also recommends that the Council consider including members of the Technical Subcommittee of the US and Canada, which also has a yelloweye rockfish workgroup, as part of the ad-hoc committee.

The GMT notes the yelloweye rockfish STAT Team recommended that the enhanced rockfish surveys conducted by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have a common sample design, yet the workshop participants did not reach consensus on a preferred design. Further, issues surrounding gear selectivity were discussed at the workshop and should be explored in further detail. The GMT recommends that the Council task the ad-hoc committee with providing survey design guidance and the utility of using these surveys to inform the assessment.

The GMT also thinks that it is important to continue to include the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) in these workshops and STAR Panel processes for yelloweye rockfish, given the importance of IPHC survey data in the assessment and their available survey platform.

PFMC
03/07/10