

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON REGULATORY DEEMING
FOR FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS AMENDMENT 20 – TRAWL
RATIONALIZATION AND AMENDMENT 21 – INTERSECTOR ALLOCATION AND
PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY FISHERY ASSOCIATIONS (CFA)

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) was briefed by Dr. Todd Lee, Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) on a report by the National Marine Fisheries (NMFS) NWFSC Economics Group on “Mandatory Economic Data Collection Program Design for Groundfish Trawl Rationalization” (NMFS Report 5). The report provides initial discussion regarding design of a program to address the PFMC’s mandatory economic data collection requirement for trawl rationalization and the Magnuson-Stevens Act monitoring requirement for Limited Access Privilege Programs.

Currently, the NWFSC conducts voluntary economic surveys of limited entry and open-access harvesting vessels, and the NMFS Regional Offices conduct voluntary processor surveys for their processed products reports. The NWFSC economic surveys provide data from groundfish trawlers on (1) ownership, homeport, and physical vessel characteristics, (2) annual revenue by source – including landings outside the west coast (including Alaska), west coast at-sea deliveries, sale/lease of vessel permits, and fishery disaster relief payments, (3) annual fixed and variable costs (not specific to fishery), and (4) crew compensation and fuel use associated with participation in the west coast groundfish trawl fishery.

While the current NWFSC economic surveys (and the Regional Offices’ processor surveys) have many useful applications, the voluntary nature of those surveys - e.g., inadequate samples for some vessel and processor strata and some communities – make them poorly suited for considering the effects of rationalization.

The SSC endorses the mandatory economic data collection requirement and makes the following recommendations:

- Vessel and processor data should be collected for several years prior to rationalization as well as post-rationalization, to provide a basis for comparison.
- Collection of revenue, cost, and employment data from vessels and processors should be mandatory for all fisheries in which they participate – not just the groundfish trawl fishery. Mandatory collection is needed to ensure that data for all fisheries are available to place the effects of rationalization in the context of each business entity’s overall economic activity and to evaluate potential spillover effects of rationalization on other fisheries.

The SSC concurs with the NWFSC report that design of the economic data collection will require collaboration with the Council, its advisory bodies, and industry participants, and that respondent burden should be minimized to the extent possible. Consultation with the NMFS Regional Offices will likely be needed to evaluate available processor data and how it can be supplemented for purposes of monitoring rationalization effects.