

## INITIAL STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR GROUNDFISH AND COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES

This agenda item concerns planning for new groundfish stock assessments that are anticipated to be completed in 2015, which will be used to inform the harvest specifications and management measures decisions for groundfish fisheries in 2017 and beyond.

The decision on which stocks to assess next year entails whether the assessment should be a full assessment that requires peer review by a stock assessment review (STAR) Panel, a data-moderate assessment (all data-moderate assessments are proposed to be reviewed in one STAR Panel), or an update assessment that requires only a review by the Council's SSC. Council policy on this subject has been to schedule no more than ten full assessments in a given year with no more than two full assessments reviewed at each STAR Panel. Given the proposal to dedicate a STAR Panel to data-moderate assessments, only eight full assessments are contemplated to be done next year. A maximum of five STAR Panels should be considered for next year. Dr. Michelle McClure and Dr. Jim Hastie, National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), will report on proposed stock assessments and a proposed 2015 stock assessment review schedule (Agenda Item F.8.b, NWFSC Report). As a further aid to a decision on potentially doing full assessments for any of the stocks that were assessed in 2013 using data-moderate methods, Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 1 documents the available age and length composition data for those stocks. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) also provides a report detailing the data they have collected to inform any assessment of kelp greenling, China rockfish, copper rockfish, or quillback rockfish (Agenda Item F.8.b, ODFW Report).

There are three Terms of Reference (TOR) that guide the stock assessment process; one specifies how the next assessment process should occur and defines the roles and responsibilities of various entities contributing to this process, one guides the development of rebuilding analyses used to develop harvest specifications and rebuilding plans for overfished species, and one that guides how new methods are reviewed and recommended for scientific activities that inform analyses used in management decision-making. These TOR have been reviewed by some members of the SSC and others, and are included as Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachments 2, 3, and 4, respectively. Staff from the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science centers have also proposed some modifications to the stock assessment TOR (Attachment 1), which are proposed in a "track changes" format, to bolster the TOR with respect to new National Standard 2 guidelines. Additionally, Council staff has proposed changes to the stock assessment TOR from the perspective of the Coastal Pelagic Species management and assessment process in Attachment 5. The Council may want to modify these TOR for the upcoming assessment cycle.

The Council will consider the input from NMFS, the advisory bodies, and the public before providing a preliminary decision on 2015-2016 stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full, data-moderate, or update), and language for the three draft TOR. The Council is scheduled to make final decisions on stock assessment planning at their September meeting.

**Council Action:**

1. **Adopt for Public Review the List of Stocks to be Assessed in 2015;**
2. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary TOR for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2015-2016;**
3. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary SSC Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis;**
4. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary TOR for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species; and**
5. **Adopt for Public Review the 2015 Groundfish Stock Assessment Review Schedule.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 1: Available Age and Length Composition Data for the Nine Data-Moderate Stocks Assessed in 2013.
2. Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 2: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2015-2016.
3. Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 3: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis for 2015-2016.
4. Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 4: Draft Terms of Reference for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species.
5. Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 5: Recommended Changes to the Groundfish/CPS Stock Assessment Terms of Reference, Reflecting Coastal Pelagic Species Management and Assessment Schedules.
6. Agenda Item F.8.b, NWFSC Report: Initial Stock Assessment Plans and TOR, Northwest Fisheries Science Center Report.
7. Agenda Item F.8.b, ODFW Report: Stock Assessment Data Available for Kelp Greenling, and China, Copper and Quillback Rockfishes for the 2015-16 Stock Assessment Cycle.

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt for Public Review a Preliminary List and Schedule of Stocks for Assessment in 2015, the Stock Assessment and Methodology Review TOR for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species, and the Rebuilding TOR for Groundfish

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