

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
INITIAL STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)
FOR GROUND FISH AND COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the documents associated with stock assessment planning, focusing in particular on the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) Report (Agenda Item F.8.b, NWFSC Report) and the set of draft Terms of Reference documents for: the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process (Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 2); Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses (Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 3); and the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species (Agenda Item F.8.a, Attachment 4).

Stock Assessment Planning

Dr. Owen Hamel (NWFSC) summarized the information in the NWFSC Report. The SSC is in general agreement with the NWFSC regarding which stocks should receive full or update assessments during 2015.

The SSC recommends the following stocks for full assessments:

- bocaccio rockfish (overfished and projected to be almost rebuilt);
- darkblotched rockfish (overfished and projected to be almost rebuilt);
- canary rockfish (overfished and not fully assessed since 2007);
- black rockfish (not fully assessed since 2007);
- widow rockfish (fully assessed in 2011 and subject to relatively high uncertainty); and
- China rockfish (never fully assessed, data-moderate assessment in 2013).

Given the STAR Panel process during 2015 could accommodate reviews of eight full stock assessments, it is reasonable to consider one or two additional stocks for full assessments. Only one additional full assessment could be reviewed if black rockfish is assessed as separate northern and southern stocks by separate stock assessment teams, as occurred in 2007. Otherwise, two additional full assessments could be reviewed.

The NWFSC Report identifies 10 stocks that could be considered as lower priority candidates for full stock assessments during 2015 (chilipepper, China, quillback and yelloweye rockfish, cowcod, kelp greenling, lingcod, Pacific ocean perch, petrale sole, and sablefish). The SSC did not come to a strong unified opinion regarding which of these stocks should be given highest priority for a full assessment, other than China rockfish. However, there were arguments made in support of full assessments for sablefish, rougheyeye rockfish, yelloweye rockfish, and kelp greenling. The SSC notes that the last assessment for kelp greenling used a catch series that is now considered to be incorrect.

It is likely that a mix of methods will be needed to assess some stocks. For example, a full age-structured model could be applied to that geographic portion of a stock's range for which age-composition data are available, and a data-moderate assessment could be developed for the remaining geographic portion. Such an approach might be sensible for nearshore species such as

China rockfish or kelp greenling, for which reasonable age-composition data sets are available for Oregon and not for the other states. Species being assessed using multiple assessment methods should be reviewed at a single STAR Panel.

The SSC supports the NWFSC Report recommendation that petrale sole receive an update assessment during 2015. The SSC recommends that sablefish be an update assessment during 2015 if this stock does not receive a full assessment.

The SSC also supports the NWFSC Report recommendation that the data-moderate STAR Panel should review assessments for no more than four species. It is likely that each species will require assessment models for multiple geographic regions. Furthermore, each species and region will need to be assessed using the two types of data-moderate assessment models (XDB-SRA and exSSS).

Terms of Reference Documents

The SSC reviewed the set of draft Terms of Reference documents for the 2015-16 biennial cycle, Attachments 2-4. Attachment 2 includes revisions to make the Terms of Reference consistent with new National Standard 2 Guidelines regarding standards for peer review. Other than those changes, the draft Terms of Reference documents are essentially unmodified versions of the Terms of Reference approved by the Council during 2012 for the last stock assessment cycle. A number of changes to the draft Terms of Reference documents were suggested and discussed. The SSC's Groundfish and CPS Subcommittees will work during the summer to develop a set of revised Terms of Reference documents that indicate all the suggested changes. These revised documents will be available in the September Council Briefing Book for review by the Council and its advisory bodies.

PFMC
06/23/14