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E.5.b Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies (09/16/09; 10:49 a.m.)

SSC Report

Dr. Steve Ralston provided Agenda Item E.5.b, Supplemental SSC Report. Additionally, he provided a PowerPoint regarding how to express uncertainty in west coast groundfish stock assessments. This presentation better defined the conceptual approach being considered by the SSC for deciding scientific uncertainty buffers.

Mr. Moore asked if this approach is adding precaution upon precaution given the precautionary assumptions within assessments. Dr. Ralston said no, this is not double counting uncertainty. There are many sources of uncertainty and this approach tries to account for more of the scientific uncertainty than is done within an assessment.

Mr. Wolford asked about the coefficient of variation and Dr. Ralston said that is the coefficient of variation from the meta-analysis of all the data-rich species. Mr. Wolford asked if ultimately it would make sense to do this meta-analysis for such a diverse group of species. Dr. Ralston said species-specific distributions of uncertainty between assessments will be evaluated as well as the coefficient of variation from the meta-analysis. All of these analyses will help the SSC and Council decide the size of the scientific uncertainty based on either within-assessment variability or between-assessment variability.

Dr. McIsaac asked for a specific example using yelloweye to understand how variance from the meta-analysis might inform a scientific uncertainty buffer. Dr. Ralston walked the Council through the example using Figure 1 in the SSC report.

Mr. Lockhart asked about the biomass ratios that are central to the meta-analysis. Dr. Ralston explained how the approach measures year-specific biomass estimates from different assessments of a stock. These paired data points are analyzed as ratios in the analysis to determine variance in estimating biomass.

Mr. Lockhart asked about the national SSC meeting in November and whether that meeting will change our SSC's approach in deciding scientific uncertainty. Dr. Ralston said our approach may change their thinking. However, none of this addresses forecast uncertainty. Other types of uncertainty that can't be well estimated now is another good reason to framework Amendment 23 to be able to fold in more uncertainty in management decisions at a later date. This methodology addresses uncertainty in estimating biomass.

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