

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STOCK ASSESSMENT AND METHODOLOGY REVIEW
PANELS

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) and the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) held a joint teleconference on September 2, 2010 to review draft terms of reference (TOR) for both the coastal pelagic species (CPS) stock assessment review (STAR) and methodology review processes. The CPSMT recommends the following changes to the drafts before their publication for additional public review. The CPSMT also reviewed and supports the recommendations of the CPSAS.

Stock Assessment Review Terms of Reference

Under the CPS STAR Coordination section on page 4 of the STAR TOR (Agenda Item J.1.a, Attachment 1), the second paragraph states that the criteria for a reviewers selection “will be based principally on a candidate’s knowledge of stock assessments and familiarity with West Coast CPS fisheries or the ecological role of CPS in the California Current.” The CPSMT agreed that having a candidate familiar with the ecological role of CPS would be a valuable asset to the STAR panel, but this should not be a candidate’s sole qualification for participation. The CPSMT believes that for the STAR panel’s primary task of biomass estimation, it is more important for a reviewer to have strong stock assessment, population dynamics, and fishery knowledge. The CPSMT recommends deleting the underlined clause above.

In Appendix A regarding the outline of a STAR panel report, the first full paragraph on page 18 reads “The assessment report should include ecological factors to consider when reviewing and / or adopting status determination criteria, OFLs [overfishing levels], ABCs [acceptable biological catch] and ACLs [annual catch limits].” The CPSMT believes that the development or review of status determination criteria and ABC will be based, in part, on stock assessment results and may benefit from the application of ecological principles, but this task is more the purview of the Scientific and Statistical Committee working in coordination with the CPSMT and/or State and Federal scientists outside the STAR panel process. The development of ACLs is primarily a policy decision that may also be informed by ecological considerations, but is not the responsibility of the STAR Panel. The CPSMT recommends removing this sentence.

The last sentence of the third paragraph on page 9 regarding STAR panel meetings states that “if the STAR Panel believes that the results of the stock assessment strongly indicate that [a] current control rule is inappropriate, it should identify this in its report and recommend further analysis needed to support a change.” The review of control rules is not the responsibility of the STAR panel. Although the process of completing and reviewing an assessment may shed light on potential harvest policy improvements, the CPSMT recommends the following rewording. “If the STAR Panel believes that the results of the stock assessment strongly indicate the need to review [a] current control rule or one of its parameters, it should identify further analysis needed to support a change in its report.”

Methodology Review Terms of Reference

The list of example topics for a methodology review in the last paragraph on page one of the Methodology Review TOR (Agenda Item J.1.a, Attachment 2) includes “(c) proposed changes to stock assessment models.” The CPS methodology review is primarily a forum for reviewing data and survey inputs that have been proposed for use in stock assessment models, not the review of the models themselves. The CPSMT recommends deleting item (c) in this paragraph, leaving the treatment of the stock assessment model to the stock assessment team and the review of the stock assessment model to the STAR panel.

The methodology review process is meant to complement and not impede the stock assessment process. The introduction of the document should be revised to clarify that the stock assessment team is not limited to previously-reviewed data or indices, nor are they limited to the recommendations of the methodology review. The stock assessment team should have the ability to include non-reviewed data sources or deviate from methodology review findings so long as the justification of such decisions is well-captured in the draft assessment document. The STAR panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee would then be tasked with determining the best science for use in management.

PFMC
09/10/10