

STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING

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.

In June, the Council made a preliminary decision to conduct full assessments for black rockfish, bocaccio, canary rockfish, China rockfish, cowcod, darkblotched rockfish, kelp greenling, and widow rockfish. The Council also made a preliminary decision to conduct update assessments for petrale sole and sablefish and indicated sablefish could either be an update or a full assessment. Further, they indicated an arrowtooth flounder assessment could be done either as an update or a data-moderate assessment.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) provides their comments and suggestions on the preliminary 2015 stock assessment plan in Agenda Item J.2.b, NMFS Report. Likewise, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife offers their perspectives and recommendations on stock assessment planning in Agenda Item J.2.b, WDFW 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 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 members of the SSC and others, and are included as Agenda Item J.2.a, Attachments 1, 2, and 3, 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. 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 final decision on 2015-2016 stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full, data-moderate, update, or catch report), and language for the three draft TOR.

Council Action:

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

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.2.a, Attachment 1: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2015-2016.
2. Agenda Item J.2.a, Attachment 2: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis for 2015-2016.
3. Agenda Item J.2.a, Attachment 3: Draft Terms of Reference for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species.
4. Agenda Item J.2.b, NMFS Report: National Marine Fisheries Service Suggestions for 2015 Groundfish Stock Assessments.
5. Agenda Item J.2.b, WDFW Report: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Groundfish Stock Assessment Planning.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview John DeVore
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt a Final List of Stock Assessments (Full, Updates, Data-Moderate, and Catch Reports), Related Terms of Reference Documents, and the Stock Assessment Review Panel Schedule for the 2015-2016 Assessment Cycle

PFMC
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