

COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURE

Groundfish Estimation Methodology Updates and Review

Approved by Council:

PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the review and Council approval of groundfish estimation methodologies, utilizing the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Groundfish Management Team (GMT). The review of current and proposed methodologies for abundance and harvest projection, exempted fishing permits (EFPs), and conservation objectives is intended to help clarify the technical basis for the Council's management actions in a scheduled matter that avoids ad hoc timing perplexities. The procedure is intended to provide peer review of the technical estimation and modeling procedures, to ensure the best and most objective technical analyses possible, to minimize confusion during the biennial management decision-making process, and to resolve disputes over methodology.

OBJECTIVES AND DUTIES

During the September and November meetings during even years or at other appropriate times, the SSC, in conjunction with the GMT, will identify methodology issues which need documentation and/or merit a full review. The SSC is responsible for reviewing new or changed methodology as opposed to specific applications of the methodology. Examples of issues that could merit a full review include new model algorithms, methods for incorporating base data into models, catch forecasting methods for major PFMC stocks, experimental design of proposed experimental fisheries, and technical changes to stock complexes or conservation objectives. Examples of issues that do not merit full review include updating existing data sets in models, adding new stocks to models, and changing data ranges used to estimate parameters in models. Issues in this latter category will be reviewed within the GMT, and can be implemented without formal review by the SSC and approval of the Council; provided both the Council and SSC receive updates on such changes; however, if warranted, the Council may require additional review by the SSC. Stock assessments would not be part of this COP, as they are governed by specific stock biennial Terms of Reference.

At the November meeting during even years the SSC will inform the Council of the methodologies ready for review and recommend a review schedule. The SSC also will notify the Council of assistance needed from management entities and the GMT to accomplish the review.

The objectives, roles and responsibilities of participants, and the template for methodology review panel reports in the groundfish methodology process are outlined in the latest version of the Terms of Reference for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species. The appropriate management entities, either themselves or with assistance from the GMT, are expected to provide background information on procedures and data bases for methodologies

undergoing full review, as well as early notification and documentation of anticipated changes in procedures for methodologies not under full review in a particular year. Management entities who submit proposals for the Methodology Review, are responsible for ensuring that materials they provide to the SSC and Council are technically sound, clearly documented, and identified by author. Documents should receive internal entity review before being sent to the Council. To provide adequate review time for the SSC, materials must be received in the Council office at least two weeks before scheduled review meetings.

The SSC and GMT will report to the Council at the September meeting during odd years on the results of these reviews and provide recommendations for all proposed methodology changes. During the September meeting during odd years, the Council will adopt all proposed changes to be implemented in the coming biennial management cycle or will provide directions for handling any unresolved methodology problems.

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