

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON  
REBUILDING PLANS FOR LINGCOD, BOCACCIO, AND PACIFIC OCEAN PERCH, INCLUDING  
ALLOCATION AND BYCATCH REDUCTION

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) had a lengthy discussion of technical issues surrounding the development and implementation of stock rebuilding plans, with particular focus on those for lingcod, bocaccio, and Pacific ocean perch (POP).

The SSC was struck by differences among the three draft rebuilding assessments. For example, the lingcod assessment has no calculation of  $B_{MSY}$ . The bocaccio assessment uses deterministic stock production modeling to frame rebuilding. The POP assessment estimates  $B_{MSY}$  to be in the range of  $0.25B_0$  (the default for an overfishing declaration) and current stock levels to be in excess of this value, thus implying the POP stock is not overfished. Our point is that there is little uniformity of approach among the three assessments.

The SSC has several recommendations for developing rebuilding plans.

- A standard approach should be developed which would become the baseline case for all rebuilding plans (e.g.,  $B_{MSY}$  determination, recruitment projections, rebuilding catch scenarios, etc.). This would at least allow initial comparisons between assessments.
- Since rebuilding scenarios are sensitive to the ways in which recruitment is forecast, a precautionary approach should be taken in this regard. The SSC recommends an approach along the lines of that used in the current draft lingcod plan where recruitment is forecast using random samples from recent observed recruitment values. Then as stocks begin to rebuild, we would re-estimate current observed recruitment trends, thus incorporating any observed effects on recruitment of increased spawning biomass without having to employ more theoretical and speculative density-dependent spawner-recruit relationships.
- In the short term, the SSC Groundfish Subcommittee should meet in July or early August with the three rebuilding stock assessment authors and attempt to develop comparable rebuilding plans. The focus of this meeting should be on technical/analytic issues.
- Particular attention should be paid to the definition of such variables as  $B_{MSY}$  and  $B_0$ . These variables need to be as consistent as possible between the different assessments. For example, in the draft bocaccio plan,  $B_{MSY}$  is equal to 46% of unexploited biomass if spawning biomass is used and 67% of unexploited biomass if total (age 1+) biomass is used.
- Some questions have been raised as to whether POP should be recategorized as not overfished, removing the need for a rebuilding plan. The SSC would like to emphasize that there is enough uncertainty in the estimates of  $B_{MSY}$  in the POP analysis that this stock should remain in the overfished category.

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