SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON REBUILDING PROGRAMS FOR CANARY ROCKFISH AND COWCOD

Canary Rockfish

Dr. Richard Methot, National Marine Fisheries Service, presented the results of the rebuilding analysis for canary rockfish to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The analysis addressed all SSC comments that were given to the author at the June meeting. The rebuilding analysis was based on the northern stock assessment. Rebuilding analyses were presented for the two scenarios used during the stock assessment to explain the low incidence of older females compared to older males. The rebuilding analyses were developed by resampling the recruits per spawner (R/S) from various time eras. The SSC agrees with this approach.

The results of the rebuilding analyses are very sensitive to the strength of the 1996 to 1998 year classes. The R/S for these three years were the highest recorded; however, there is uncertainty associated with these values, because they are based solely on the 1998 triennial survey. Until these strong recruitments can be confirmed by the 2001 triennial survey, the SSC agrees with the results obtained by resampling R/S values from the preferred model approved by the Stock Assessment and Review (STAR) Panel. In the northern area, the median time to rebuild, in the absence of fishing, exceeded 60 years for both scenarios. The time to rebuild ranged from 81 to 132 years when an annual catch of 13 to 40 mt was added.

Cowcod

Mr. Tom Barnes, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), presented the results of the cowcod rebuilding analysis to the SSC. The analysis addressed most of the SSC comments that were given to the author at the June meeting. The rebuilding analysis was based on a surplus production model. The median time to rebuild, in the absence of fishing, ranged from 42 years when initial biomass was set at 11% of virgin biomass to 81 years if initial biomass was 4% of virgin biomass. When annual catches of 2.5 mt to 6.4 mt were added, the median time to rebuild ranged from 92 years to 277 years. It will be difficult to achieve catch targets in this range. The SSC is supportive of proposals outlined by CDFG (Exhibit G.4, Attachment 2) to reduce cowcod catch rates.

A delay difference model was used for the cowcod assessment. This model predicts a longer time to rebuild the stock compared to the surplus production model. The SSC would have preferred that the authors use the model approved by the STAR Panel; however, the difference in allowable catch levels during rebuilding would probably be negligible.

PFMC
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