

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON REBUILDING PLANS

Mr. John DeVore briefed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on the planning and progress toward rebuilding amendments to the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP). The expectation is that rebuilding plans for cowcod, darkblotched rockfish, lingcod, Pacific ocean perch, and widow rockfish will be incorporated in the first rebuilding FMP amendment scheduled for Council adoption in September 2002. A second rebuilding amendment – scheduled for Council adoption in November 2002 – will include bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfish.

As highlighted in the SSC's March 2002 statement, the Council should expect numeric details of rebuilding plans (e.g., B_{MSY} in metric tons) to change over time – whether due to improved estimates of these parameters from updated stock assessments or due to technical errors that were not caught in the previous stock assessment review. The use of hard numbers in the rebuilding amendment should be minimized in order to avoid the need to repeatedly amend the FMP with each stock assessment cycle. Instead, formulae and algorithms should be specified whenever possible (e.g., $B_{MSY} = 0.4 B_0$), and Stock Assessment Team (STAT) teams should be asked to identify and explore assessment models that will be more robust with respect to the numeric values that do need to be specified. The terms of reference for STAT teams and Stock Assessment Review Panels should be modified accordingly.

Further, it is important to distinguish between the biological and policy parameters that collectively govern the rebuilding process. Virgin biomass (B_0), biomass target for rebuilding (B_{MSY}), and minimum rebuilding time (T_{min}) are examples of biological parameters; while the target rebuilding time (T_{target}) and the probability of achieving the rebuilding goal (B_{MSY}) within T_{target} years are examples of policy parameters. While it should be possible to specify numerically some or all of the policy parameters, only the formulae and algorithms for biological parameters should be specified in FMP amendments.

PFMC
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