

Excerpt from Summary Minutes of the March 2003 SSC Meeting

Initial Review of Groundfish Management Team Multi-Year Management Mid-Point Review Thresholds

Dr. Hastie provided background information and reviewed GMT consideration of this issue. He noted that when the Groundfish Multi-year Management Process (Amendment 17) was adopted, the Council directed the GMT to recommend a methodology react to survey results (or any new relevant information) in an off-year that is dramatically different from those previously considered to set OYs under multi-year management.

In their February 2003 meeting summary, the GMT noted that thresholds need to be established for adjustments for both decreasing and increasing stock sizes.

The GMT developed several threshold options for consideration:

- *Only species not under rebuilding.*
- *Any change (in either direction) that has significant effects- "case-by-case" basis.*
- *Minimum change of 5% to 10% in OY (in either direction).*
- *Maximum change of 20% in OY (in either direction) as a cap on the amount of change allowed.*
- *Include potential changes in NEPA documents when two one-year OYs are adopted for analytical purposes.*

Dr. Hastie noted that the GMT preferred an automatic process rather than a discretionary process. Under multi-year management and using the mid-point review process, when management specifications are developed, an evaluation of potential mid-course corrections should be included in the management specifications environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. This would facilitate changes to the specifications, because the effects would have been analyzed previously and could possibly be treated as an inseason change.

Because of the amount of work involved, the GMT advised this process should be used prudently and only if major adjustments were needed.

The SSC agreed it would be critically important to have an automatic process where impacts and alternatives had been previously analyzed. The SSC suggested that past stock assessments be reviewed to determine how often the need for mid-course corrections could arise. The SSC also discussed their previous advice to the Council on multi-year management, "The SSC reiterates that it is most important to base management advice on results from stock assessments that use the most recent data. However, across the four biennial options considered, there is a substantial range in the timeliness of the scientific information that will be used to manage the groundfish fishery. Alternative 5 provides the most current information and is, therefore, the option preferred by the SSC" (Exhibit G.5.c, Supplemental SSC Report, November 2002). The SSC will continue to work with the GMT as the GMT develops the mid-point review process.