

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GROUND FISH REBUILDING PLAN REVIEW AND  
STOCK ASSESSMENT REVIEW PANELS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed the Terms of Reference for stock assessment review (STAR) panels and groundfish rebuilding plan review. The SSC recognizes that 2005 will clearly be an exceptional year, due to the much higher workload than usual, due to the implementation of the new biennial (multi-year) stock assessment and management process. Thus, some of the historical terms of reference may be impracticable; in particular, those that concern the number of stock assessment reviewers and the thoroughness of the stock assessment reviews. The SSC recommends the Terms of Reference be revisited after completion of the first multi-year management cycle.

Regarding the STAR panel process, the SSC suggested that: (1) for reasons of continuity and efficiency, it may be useful if the SSC representatives on STAR panels would also typically serve as STAR panel chairs, (2) SSC representatives on STAR panels should continue to convey STAR panel findings to the Council, but should attend the post-STAR panel meeting only if requested.

Regarding the Terms of Reference for groundfish rebuilding plan review, the SSC recognizes the Council has been requested by the National Marine Fisheries Service to establish a process to monitor and respond to rebuilding progress. The SSC will work with the Council to develop a set of guidelines and tools to evaluate rebuilding status. Such guidelines should be in place by April 2005, so they could be used for the 2005 stock assessment cycle.