

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) primarily considered the Terms of Reference (TOR) for stock assessment review (STAR) panels under this agenda item. To a limited degree, review of groundfish rebuilding plans was also discussed.

The SSC recognizes that 2005 will be an exceptional year due to the large number of stocks being assessed in support of the new, multi-year stock assessment and management process. Modifications to the Council's long-standing STAR TOR were discussed in light of these changes. The SSC recommends that:

1. The principal process and document content recommendations from the Recreational Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) Workshop (June 2004) and Stock Assessment Modeling Workshop (October 2004) be incorporated into the TOR.
2. A minimum of four reviewers should serve on each STAR panel. For panels that review more than three stock assessments, the number of reviewers assigned to a STAR panel should, if at all possible, follow an "n+1" rule of thumb, where n is the number of stock assessments under review by the panel.
3. For reasons of continuity and efficiency, the SSC representatives on STAR panels should also typically serve as STAR panel chairs. SSC representatives on STAR panels should continue to convey STAR panel findings to the Council.

Otherwise, aside from updating text, references, etc., the SSC recommends the TOR with the above revisions should be used for this assessment cycle. However, immediately after completion of the first multi-year management cycle, experiences from the new process should be evaluated. The SSC is willing to initiate this evaluation by organizing an informal evening session in conjunction with the November 2005 Council meeting; and then to follow-up with further SSC deliberations on the TOR.

Notwithstanding these recommendations, the SSC considered the Groundfish Management Team's (GMT's) suggestions for TOR modifications regarding the (i) evaluation of regional stock differences and (ii) inclusion of rebuilding parameters in the executive summary of stock assessment documents (*cf.* Supplemental GMT Report C.8, September 2004). The SSC agrees that (i) would be desirable for some stocks, but adding it to the TOR – applicable to all stocks – would be overly burdensome for both stock assessment authors and the assessment review process. Instead, the SSC suggests the GMT request such evaluations from assessment authors on a case-by-case basis, as required for GMT deliberations.

With regard to GMT suggestion (ii), the SSC continues to recommend that the STAR process and the process for reviewing rebuilding plans should be separate, sequential steps in the Council's management cycle. As such, many stock-specific rebuilding parameters will not be available for inclusion in documents prepared for the STAR process. However, these parameters could be delineated in the executive summary of the SSC-proposed rebuilding analysis document in order to meet the GMT's needs.

Regarding the TOR 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 for evaluating rebuilding status. Such guidelines should be available for review and consideration by April 2005.

PFMC  
11/02/04