

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON  
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GROUND FISH REBUILDING PLAN REVIEW

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the draft Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses, as well as the other attachments for this agenda item, and offers the following comments. The GMT reiterates its request to mandate the inclusion of the following estimates and projections in the Terms of Reference for future rebuilding analyses:

- Estimate of  $P_{MAX}$  ( $P\{\text{rebuilding by } T_{MAX}\}$ ) at  $F = 0$ .
- Ten-year acceptable biological catch (ABC)/optimum yield (OY) projections and estimates of the  $F$  rate (both SPR and  $F$ ) and  $T_{MAX}$  under rebuilding likelihoods ranging from  $P_{MAX} = 0.5$  to the  $P_{MAX}$  under  $F = 0$  (at 10 percentile increments).
- Decision table for all equally plausible assessment/rebuilding models.
- Date of data extraction.

The GMT would also desire to see a regional stratification of the ABC/OY projections if the assessment indicates regional differences in the population dynamics or stock structure of the species. This will enable specification of regional OYs or harvest guidelines and/or regionally variant management measures. The GMT considers this management approach critical to avoid potential problems of localized depletion, geographic concentration of fishing effort, and risks to a stock's age and genetic structure.

Finally, the GMT reviewed "Establishing Quantitative Criteria for Assessing Adequacy of Progress Towards Rebuilding Overfished West Coast Groundfish Stocks (Agenda Item F.3.b, Attachment 1) and "Evaluating Alternative Rebuilding Revision Rules for Assessing Progress Towards Rebuilding of Overfished West Coast Groundfish" (Agenda Item F.3.b, Attachment 2). The first issue paper describes the recommended analyses for evaluating adequacy of an existing rebuilding plan, which focuses on changes in  $P_{MAX}$  and the SPR harvest rate relative to the original rebuilding plan. Given the relative scale of the groundfish rebuilding framework and how many different assessment parameters can have a major effect on our understanding current stock status, the GMT believes this is a sensible approach for evaluating rebuilding progress. Therefore, the GMT recommends the evaluation "tool" described in the first paper be adopted and incorporated in the SSC Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analyses at the April Council meeting.

The second issue paper concerns policy choices (termed "revision rules") for modifying rebuilding plans once an evaluation of rebuilding progress is done in a rebuilding analysis. The complexity of potential effects of each of these policy choices is explored in this paper. The GMT would like more time to better understand these dynamics. The GMT recommends that the revision rules described in the second paper take a longer, more deliberative pathway to adoption. It is recommended that the Council adopt revision rules at the September or November 2005 Council meetings prior to adopting the range of 2007-2008 harvest specifications. It would also benefit the process if a joint session on these alternative revision rules were scheduled for the April or June Council meeting to foster a clearer understanding of the implications of these policy choices.

## **Summary of GMT Recommendations**

1. Include the estimates and projections listed above in the Terms of Reference for future rebuilding analysis
2. Consider regional stratification of ABC/OY projections in future rebuilding analysis where differences in population dynamics or stock structure are apparent.
3. Adopt the evaluation approach for assessing the adequacy of rebuilding plans described in Agenda Item F.3.b
4. Hold a joint session on alternative rebuilding plan revision rules at the April or June Council meetings.