

## SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON OFF-YEAR SCIENCE IMPROVEMENTS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) received a briefing from Dr Jim Hastie Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) regarding off-year science activities. The NWFSC has committed to supporting a workshop to examine the two available pre-recruit groundfish surveys. Also under consideration is a de-briefing meeting, which probably would be held in conjunction with the March Council meeting, to review the lessons learned during the 2005 assessment cycle and begin development of terms of reference for the 2007 cycle.

The SSC strongly recommends that plans for the de-briefing meeting be developed as soon as possible. For this meeting the SSC requests that the NWFSC staff summarize the comments provided by the committee of independent experts (CIE) reviewers regarding technical as well as process and logistical issues that arose during the 2005 Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panels. The SSC recommends that Dr. Robert Mohn, the CIE reviewer who participated in all of the 2005 STAR Panels, be invited to the de-briefing meeting to share his view on how the STAR Panel process could be improved.

Members of the SSC identified numerous issues that could be organized into a series of four workshops during 2006 (not listed in priority order): (1) a RecFIN Workshop to discuss issues regarding recreational data collection, estimation, and use in in-season management, (2) a Data Workshop to discuss issues such as reconstructing historical catches and developing guidelines for pre-processing of assessment data and producing abundance indices for assessments, (3) a Modeling Workshop to develop guidelines for issues such as adjusting input CVs on tuning indices and effective sample sizes for length and age composition data, and (4) an Assessment Science Workshop to discuss approaches to estimating  $B_0$  and threshold biomass levels, and using these estimates in harvest control rules. The workshops probably will not be able to occur until summer or fall 2006, and times for the workshops should be identified soon so that interested parties will be able to plan their schedules.

The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee will take the lead in developing a comprehensive list of issues arising during the 2005 assessment cycle and topics for discussion at each of the 2006 workshops. SSC Groundfish Subcommittee will collaborate with the NMFS and Council to develop terms of reference for the workshops. Members of the Groundfish Management Team and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel will be invited to share their thoughts on the 2005 assessment cycle and how the process could be improved for the next cycle.

### *Possible Workshop Topics Arising during SSC Discussions:*

- *Use of juvenile surveys.*
- *Tuning data errors.*
- *Biomass-based targets and thresholds.*
- *RecFIN especially CRFS.*
- *Age data, ageing errors, age composition generation.*
- *Pre-assessment workshop to encourage input from industry and other groups.*
- *Spatial assessments.*

- *Priors on steepness and  $q$ .*
- *Reconstructing historical catch series.*
- *Model complexity.*
- *Steps towards developing an ecosystems report.*
- *Longitudinal review to compare modeling approaches and look for common patterns across species.*
- *Guidelines for dealing with trans-boundary stocks, e.g., lingcod.*
- *Estimating (defining)  $SB_0$  when there are changes in growth and/or maturity.*
- *Guidelines for assessments lacking current tuning indices (e.g., cowcod and yelloweye).*

PFMC  
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