

February 28, 2006

Dr. Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 Northeast Ambassador Place
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Dear Dr. McIsaac:

First of all, I want to thank the Council and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center for your cooperation in ensuring the process to review and reconsider a new stock assessment and rebuilding plan for yelloweye rockfish went as smooth as possible. I would also like to commend the Stock Assessment (STAT) Team for their efforts. They put in a lot of hours to produce new model runs, and draft a revised assessment and rebuilding analyses within the limited timeframe.

Among the benefits of the additional effort was the STAT Team's work to undertake a comprehensive review of all of the available data and an examination of how the natural mortality rate was estimated. In contrast to the 2002 and 2005 assessments, the new assessment allows the model to re-estimate the natural mortality rate.

We note that one of the key parameters that changed in the 2006 assessment, which may have had a significant effect, is the selectivity function. In the 2002 and 2005 assessments, a double-logistic selectivity was used; in 2006, a logistic selectivity was used. The logistic selectivity would suggest that larger, older fish are as available to the fishery as younger fish, whereas the double-logistic selectivity supports the theory that the larger, older fish are not available to the fishery.

It is my understanding that the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel was made aware of this parameter change, but did not review in detail the affect of this change on the model. Perhaps, given the abbreviated STAR Panel meeting and the process deadlines, which needed to be met, there was not sufficient time to fully explore the effects of the change in selectivity function. However, I believe that this is a significant change and I recommend that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) explore this issue including the potential need for a sensitivity run using the dome-shaped selectivity function. This run, if confirmed by the SSC, should occur at the Council meeting next week. The STAT Team will be available at the SSC meeting on Monday to address any questions and to respond to this request.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (360) 902-2720.

Sincerely,

Philip Anderson, Special Assistant
Intergovernmental Resource Management

cc: Council Members
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