SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON MANAGEMENT SPECIFICATIONS OF 2007-2008 FISHERIES

Under this agenda item, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) was briefed by (1) Mr. John DeVore (Council Staff) on the final groundfish acceptable biological catches (ABCs) and optimum yields (OYs) for 2007-2008 and on the preliminary revised rebuilding plans; and (2) Dr. Steve Freese (NMFS) and Mr. Merrick Burden (NMFS) on the socioeconomic analysis review. These topics were discussed separately.

(1) Final ABCs and OYs for 2007-2008 and Preliminary Revised Rebuilding Plans

Whenever a "ramp-down" strategy is used for setting the OYs in a rebuilding plan (e.g. yelloweye rockfish), care should be taken to ensure that the resulting annual Fs during the ramp-down period are maintained at or below the F_{MSY} overfishing threshold. Tables showing the rebuilding alternatives for each stock (such as those found in Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment 3) should be amended to display the respective Fs and spawning biomass per recruits (SPRs). Also of interest but of lesser importance, the F or catch associated with the 40-10 rule could be added as well. Beyond the criterion of maintaining $F < F_{MSY}$, the SSC views the ramp-down strategy as a Council policy call that entails some increased, but unquantified level of risk.

(2) Socioeconomic Analysis Review

An earlier version of this analysis was reviewed by the SSC in June 2005. Typically, catch reductions are needed in order to rebuild overfished stocks. Rather than simply reducing tonnage proportionally among commercial fishery sectors, the socioeconomic analysis evaluates the trade-off between forgone ex-vessel revenue and reduced bycatch of each overfished stock for various commercial fishery sectors. In addition to this trade-off analysis, the authors provide additional analyses pertaining to the relative impacts of each region and fishing sector on overfished stocks and the relative impacts of restrictions on bycatch of overfished stocks on each port within each region. Given the flexibility of the analysis, it should prove quite useful in the Council's deliberative processes. The SSC suggests, however, that future work include recreational fisheries data to the extent possible and that if practical, other measure of fishery effects (e.g. personal income impacts) be incorporated into the trade-off analysis.

For an overfished stock, time-to-recovery appears to be the major focus of the fishery management plan amendment. As such, it would be useful to have time-to-recovery as the response variable rather than – or in addition to – overfished species catch, e.g. as in Figures 1-10 in Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment 4. Further, operationally linking the projection model (used for rebuilding analysis) and the bycatch model would help to better gauge the long-term vs. short-term trade-offs associated with the various management alternatives.

Finally, it was noted that the database used for the socioeconomic analysis reflects catch ratios for various sectors of the fishery that were more or less constant for many years, e.g. the ratio of catch from the open-access vs. limited-entry commercial sectors. However, alternatives in rebuilding plans do not need be constrained to the same ratios. Care should be taken to ensure that the ratios used in rebuilding plans are similar to those used in the socioeconomic analyses.

PFMC
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