

OFF-YEAR SCIENCE IMPROVEMENTS

This year is considered the “on-year” for intensive science activities as new groundfish stock assessments and rebuilding analyses are formally approved for management decision-making for 2009 and 2010 groundfish fisheries. While it is not entirely accurate to characterize the biennial management cycle in terms of an “on-year” and “off-year” for science, it is correct to distinguish the year in which stock assessments are conducted (the “on year”) and the year other science activities are planned to prepare for the following assessment cycle and to resolve scientific issues that play a significant role in groundfish decision-making.

There are many activities that have been planned and/or should be considered for “off-year” science improvements. Some of these activities may be planned and sponsored by the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) (e.g., a pre-assessment data and modeling workshop to prepare for the next round of assessments); some activities may be planned and sponsored by the Council or the Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) (e.g., a post-assessment workshop to review how well the assessment process worked this year and a second harvest policy evaluation workshop); and some activities may be recommended by other entities (e.g., Agenda Item G.2.a, Attachment 1).

Recently, the Council’s Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has discussed the need for a formal reconciliation of historical groundfish catches for use by managers and assessment scientists. Assessment authors spend considerable time reconstructing historical catches for individual assessments, a process which is often repeated with each new assessment. Rather than repeating these efforts or doing catch reconstructions in an ad hoc species-by-species basis, the GMT is recommending a comprehensive effort to reconcile historical catches for all groundfish species and housing these catch estimates in a database such as PacFIN so they can be accessed by any interested party. The NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center is currently digitizing historical CDFG records that include monthly summaries of landings by CDFG block and individual fish ticket information back to 1931. Such efforts will be useful in a comprehensive catch history reconstruction.

The Council should consider the proposals and advice of the NWFSC, Council advisory bodies, other agencies, and the general public regarding off-year science improvements and plan and prioritize science activities for 2008.

Council Action:

Plan and Prioritize Science Activities for 2008.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.2.a, Attachment 1: Suggestions for generic topics for “off-year” workshops (from Patrick Cordue, Center for Independent Experts).

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Northwest Fisheries Science Center Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Plan and Prioritize Science Activities for 2008

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08/17/07