

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

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed off-year science improvement activity and concluded that several highly focused topics would be more productive than a large number of items. The SSC also deliberated about the organization and planning of these activities. Some research topics would be best addressed in a workshop setting while others may be most effectively accomplished within committees or working groups. Success of any research topic described herein will require substantial scientific input and support. The SSC offers the following topics, in prioritized order, with organizational and planning suggestions:

- Post-mortem workshop of the 2007-2008 assessment cycle to evaluate the stock assessment review process. The SSC recommends that this workshop take place in Portland on December 5, 2007.
- Data enhancement projects undertaken as follows:

Reconciliation of historical commercial groundfish catches for use by managers and assessment scientists. Such an effort should include establishment of a database for historical groundfish catch histories that include a coordinated and comprehensive allocation structure (strata, time, etc) which is web accessible and maintained for updates and revisions. This task may be best handled using a committee (catch reconstruction working group) comprised of federal and state representatives, including industry input.

Similar reconciliation of historical recreational catches and raw catch and effort data. Recreational databases should be accessible, transparent, and standardized across states to the extent possible and include ancillary information on regulations. A committee or working group including RecFIN representatives and stock assessment analysts may be the appropriate mechanism to accomplish this task.

Both of these projects should include a review process that allows agencies and industry to provide needed checks on the validity of the data.

- A comprehensive analysis of survey timing and other factors affecting catch rates in both the triennial and Northwest Fisheries Science Center shelf/slope bottom trawl surveys. Factors affecting survey catchability may need to be incorporated into generalized linear models to account for such changes.
- A second harvest policy evaluation workshop to evaluate groundfish harvest policies. Such a workshop may need to consider the Council's groundfish harvest policies with regard to the new annual catch limits and accountability measures specified in the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act. Final scheduling is anticipated to be determined after annual catch limits are clarified. The SSC, in conjunction with National Marine Fisheries Service, State agencies and Academics, will assist in planning and organization of this workshop with Council Staff.
- Development and use of priors on survey catchability. The current whiting and sablefish stock assessments depend critically on priors for catchability that would benefit from

such a workshop. This research topic would require two steps. First, development of methodology and second, a workshop to apply the methodology.

- Evaluation of alternative methods to survey rockfish which do not commonly occur in the traditional bottom trawl surveys. This topic would be focus of a workshop to evaluate survey methodologies currently being developed for suitability in stock assessments.
- Development of data poor assessment approaches and their implementation into the management process. This topic may best be addressed by a working group. California Department of Fish and Game is currently in the process of sponsoring a symposium on this topic.

*A steering committee should be established to establish the breath and scope of such workshops and designate time tables for completing of tasks.*

*Database to include uncertainty in historical catch reconstructions.*

PFMC  
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