

The Assessment

Dr. Walsh notes, "While the U.S. fishery management system is built on many of the same sustainability principles measured by these ecolabelling and certification schemes, managers have wrestled with how to apply these static evaluation approaches to the dynamic management system we use in the United States."

To address this challenge, Walsh and her colleagues used a functional evaluation method capable of cross-walking the FAO guidelines to the U.S. federal fisheries management system. This method enabled the authors to assess whether or not the U.S. management system produces biologically-sustainable and well-managed fishery resources, according to the FAO guidelines.

While the assessment demonstrated the U.S. system meets FAO guidelines and highlighted its strengths, the assessment also highlighted some areas for improvement, including:

- Addressing nationwide implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to management
- Incorporating broader food web considerations within individual fish stock management schemes
- Considering long-term changes in productivity

These areas are the focus of discussions among fisheries scientists and managers as the United States continues to advance and improve upon its dynamic science-based management system.

After NOAA Fisheries completed its assessment on the sustainability of U.S. federal fisheries management, we contracted the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) to independently validate the assessment's approach and detect any bias within NOAA Fisheries' self-assessment. The CIE reviewers independently conducted the same assessment of U.S. federal fisheries management using the functional evaluation method developed by NOAA Fisheries. Dr. Walsh and her colleagues compared the four assessments conducted by both NOAA Fisheries and the CIE reviewers and found they were generally in agreement. The results, summarized below, are based on the average of the four independent assessments, one conducted by NOAA Fisheries' and three from the independent CIE reviewers.

[Click here to read the assessment.](#) For any questions, contact Laurel.Bryant@noaa.gov.

References

United Nations. 1987. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987. www.un-documents.net/a42r187.htm [EXIT](#)

WCED. 1987. Our Common Future. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Published as Annex to General Assembly document A/42/427, Development and International Co-operation: Environment, August 2. www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf [EXIT](#)

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