

JOINT REPORT BETWEEN THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS)
WEST COAST REGION AND SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER (SWFSC) ON
AMENDMENT 4: SPECIFYING MSY-BASED PROXIES FOR STATUS DETERMINATIONS

The SWFSC is examining its role in selecting which of the MSY-based reference points from those provided in international assessments are the most appropriate to use as the proxies to calculate status based on the status determination criteria (SDCs)¹ in the Fishery Management Plan for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP). Selecting appropriate proxies has both scientific and management implications. At this time, NMFS is investigating potential mechanisms for standardizing proxy selection based on scientific appropriateness, including frameworks to guide these decisions. This work will require coordination across the agency and internationally.

In the interim, NMFS proposes to use estimates or proxies for F_{msy} and B_{msy} that the science providers to the regional fishery management organizations have determined to be most appropriate. NMFS can make this information available to the Council and its advisory bodies during NMFS' stock status determinations process, which would be aligned with the Council's biennial management process if Amendment 4, as proposed, is implemented. NMFS regards such an approach as aligned with the Highly Migratory Species Management Team's (HMSMT) recommendation to the Council during its September 2016 meeting. Specifically, the HMSMT recommended Council consideration of proxies for SDCs occur on a case-by-case basis (see option 3 on page 3 of [Agenda Item J.3.a, Supplemental HMSMT Report 2](#)).

¹ Maximum fishing mortality threshold = F_{MSY} and minimum stock size threshold = cB_{MSY} where c is the difference of 1 minus the natural mortality rate (M) or 0.5, whichever is greater.