SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON SCIENCE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed reports and recommendations from the Catch Estimation Methodology Review. A meeting to review the proposed method to partition landings to species in California commercial fisheries (Agenda Item I.6, Attachment 1), took place March 28-29, 2018, in Santa Cruz, California (Agenda Item I.6, Attachment 2), and a supplemental review webinar was held on July 31, 2018 (Agenda Item I.6, Supplemental Attachment 3). Dr. John Field presented an overview of the modeling approach. Dr. David Sampson presented the reports and recommendations of the review panel.

The goal of the proposed method is to provide a rigorous and repeatable Bayesian analysis to estimate landings by species where reported landings are by market category with sparse sampling for species compositions within those categories. This issue is primarily associated with rockfish species. The proposed landings estimation approach is, in its theoretical underpinnings, an improvement over the "borrowing" rules currently used for CalCOM, and provides uncertainty estimates. More work is needed to refine and test this new approach before it can be used, particularly in terms of determining appropriate model complexity and modeling choices. The review panel was unable to endorse the method without further analysis and exploration, identifying several items still to be addressed. The SSC similarly does not endorse the use of this new method at this time. The SSC commends the team for progress in addressing this difficult issue and their responsiveness to the requests of the review panel, and encourages further work in the hope an approved version of this approach will be ready to produce landings estimates for assessments conducted in 2021. This will require some level of additional review in 2020, potentially by the SSC's Groundfish Subcommittee, rather than by a full methodology review panel.

PFMC
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