

INITIAL STOCK ASSESSMENT PLAN AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

This agenda item concerns planning for new groundfish stock assessments that are anticipated to be completed in 2021 and 2023 which will be used to inform the harvest specifications and management measures decisions for groundfish fisheries in 2023 and beyond.

The decision on which stocks to assess in the next two assessment cycles entails whether the assessment should be a full assessment that requires peer review by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel, a data-moderate assessment, or an update assessment that requires only a review by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). Council policy on this subject has been to schedule no more than ten full assessments in a given year with no more than two full assessments reviewed at each STAR Panel. A maximum of five STAR Panels should be considered for next year.

Dr. Jim Hastie, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), will report on proposed stock assessment priorities (Agenda Item H.2, Attachments 1 and 2). While the proposed stock assessment priorities are helpful in deciding which stocks are assessed next year, it is important to note these "priorities" are informative, not prescriptive.

There are three Terms of Reference (TOR) that guide the stock assessment process; one specifies how the [next groundfish and coastal pelagic species \(CPS\) assessment process](#) should occur and defines the roles and responsibilities of various entities contributing to this process, one guides the development of [groundfish rebuilding analyses](#) used to develop harvest specifications and rebuilding plans for overfished and rebuilding species, and one guides how [new methods are reviewed and recommended for scientific activities](#) that inform analyses used in groundfish and CPS management decision-making. These TOR will be reviewed by the SSC and other advisory bodies, and are available electronically. Recommendations on the stock assessment process are provided in draft summary minutes from the December 2019 Groundfish Stock Assessment Process Review Workshop in Attachment 3. The Council may want to modify these TORs for the upcoming assessment cycle.

The Council will consider the input from NMFS, state and Tribal agencies, the advisory bodies, and the public before providing a preliminary decision on 2021 and 2023 stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full, data-moderate, or update), and language for the three draft TORs. The Council is scheduled to make final decisions on stock assessment planning at their June meeting.

Council Action:

Adopt for Public Review:

- 1. A Preliminary List and Schedule of Stocks for Assessment in 2021 and 2023,**
- 2. A Draft Terms of Reference for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessments,**
- 3. A Draft Terms of Reference for Methodology Reviews, and**
- 4. A Draft Terms of Reference for Rebuilding Analyses.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 1: Data and Analysis Supporting the Prioritization of Species for Stock Assessments in 2021 and 2023.
2. Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 2: NMFS Assessment Prioritization Workbook (Electronic Only).
3. Agenda Item H.2, Attachment 3: SSC Groundfish Subcommittee Report on Groundfish Stock Assessment Process Review Webinar held on December 13, 2019.
4. Agenda Item H.2.a, ODFW Report 1: ODFW Report on Initial Stock Assessment Plan.
5. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- H.2 Initial Stock Assessment Plan and Terms of Reference John DeVore
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt for Public Review a Preliminary List and Schedule of Stocks for Assessment in 2021 and 2023 and Draft Terms of Reference for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessments, Methodology Reviews, and Rebuilding Analyses

PFMC
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