

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) continues to note the negative impact on the group's engagement and efficiency due to the inability of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) employees to participate in the video/screen-sharing portion of the Ring Central meetings with government owned computers. The SSC is developing a list of best practices for presenters to make it easier for NMFS employees who must present while Council staff displays their slides and for participants who must view the slides without seeing pointers/cursors of speakers. This may help matters but will not have the same effect as everyone simply being able to use the same platform.

The SSC offers the following guidance on the future Council meeting agenda and workload planning.

The SSC did not receive any proposals for methodology review under Agenda Item D.3 at this meeting. Therefore, the SSC recommends removal of Agenda Item I.2 - Impact Analyses Methodology Review, Final Topics proposed for the November Council meeting in [Agenda Item C.7, Attachment 2](#).

The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee met with analysts on September 2, 2020, to discuss the information available for a possible methodology review of the Elasmobranch Harvest Control Rule in the late fall or early winter. The Subcommittee plans to have another check-in with the analysts prior to the November Council meeting; if a methodology review is scheduled the SSC recommends inviting Dr. Martin Dorn (Alaska Fisheries Science Center) because of his experience in harvest control rule development, including for elasmobranchs. The SSC Groundfish Committee also needs to review the short-term tasks requested of the Stock Synthesis with Catches and Length (SS-CL) proponents prior to formal adoption of the methodology. This review could be conducted at the same meeting as the Elasmobranch analyst check-in, in October or early November prior to the November 2020 Council meeting. The SSC also recommends additional remotely-operated vehicle methodology workshops to promote further development and to harmonize both field and analytical methods; these could be scheduled to occur after September 2021 when biennial stock assessment duties are complete. The SSC continues to give high priority to the review of the ongoing Sablefish Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) and hopes to hear an update from the analysts in November 2020.

The SSC discussed the STT report from the April 2020 Council meeting ([Agenda Item E.4.a, Supplemental STT Report 2](#)) which raised concerns about possible lack of sampling or under-sampling of total catch, effort, and/or sampling of catch for code-wire tags due to concerns over COVID-19. In particular, this may impact the calculation of cohort size and of exploitation rates used to determine overfishing status for Klamath River Fall Chinook and Sacramento River Fall Chinook, and that serve as annual inputs to their forecast models. The SSC advises that agencies coordinate with the Salmon Technical Team as soon as possible about data gaps and how they will be addressed, changes in forecast methodology, and changes in sampling. If the Council tasks the SSC or the SSC Salmon Subcommittee with reviewing or advising on any changes, the SSC recommends having that review take place before the March meeting.

The California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment team alerted the SSC Ecosystem Subcommittee chair that there may be major changes to the annual integrated ecosystem assessment (IEA) report in 2021 due to COVID-19 impacts on data collection and processing. The SSC Ecosystem Subcommittee can meet in January 2021 if the Council requests review of these changes prior to the March 2021 Council meeting.

The SSC reviewed the SSC Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Subcommittee report from July 2020 (appended to [Agenda Item G.1.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, September 2020](#)) and updated information regarding surveys. The California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) egg and larval survey, and the spring and summer Acoustic Trawl (AT) surveys were cancelled this year. Southwest Fisheries Science Center staff are ageing backlogged anchovy and sardine otoliths so new historical age data should be available for assessments in 2021. The SSC agrees with the CPS subcommittee report conclusions that a full assessment of the Central Subpopulation of Northern Anchovy (CSNA) should be conducted in 2021 even without recent AT survey data. An assessment would increase the biological understanding of the CSNA and could be informative with respect to reference points. Substantial new age data for the CSNA will be available, as will multiple historical survey estimates (e.g., from CalCOFI). Egg and larval data have been reviewed for use with the CSNA.

The Pacific mackerel catch-only projection scheduled for delivery to the Council in June 2021 should proceed as planned regardless of 2020 and 2021 surveys.

The SSC also agrees with the CPS subcommittee recommendation of a catch-only projection for Pacific sardine during 2021. Revisions to historical catch estimates can be accommodated within catch-only projections, although a slightly elevated level of review involving refitting of the model would be needed if any of the revised catches are for years entering the likelihood calculations. Substantial additions of age data would require an update assessment, but the information content of a modest amount of new age data may not justify the workload impact of an update assessment. The review of a catch-only update can occur at an SSC meeting and does not require a separate SSC CPS Subcommittee meeting. The SSC recommends that the next full assessment for Pacific sardine consider a longer time series than the previous full assessment. Such a “research assessment” could be very informative in evaluating progress toward rebuilding.

Proposed Workshops and SSC Subcommittee Meetings for 2020 and 2021							
Workshop/Meeting		Potential Dates	Sponsor/ Tentative Location	SSC Reps.	Additional Reviewers	AB Reps.	Council Staff
1	Elasmobranch Harvest Control Rule Methodology Planning and Length-Based Assessment Review Follow-up	October TBD	Council/Webinar	Groundfish Subcommittee Members	Dorn	NA	DeVore
2	Elasmobranch Harvest Control Rule Methodology Review, if recommended	Fall 2020/Winter 2021	Council/TBD	Groundfish Subcommittee Members	Dorn	GMT GAP	DeVore
3	SSC Ecosystem Subcommittee	January 2021	Council/Webinar	Ecosystem Subcommittee Members	CCIEA Team Members	NA	DeVore Dahl
4	CSNA STAR Panel	Spring 2021?	Council/TBD	CPS Subcommittee Members	2 CIE	CPSMT CPSAS	Griffin
5	Pacific Sardine Update Assessment Review (unless a catch-only projection is provided as recommended by the SSC, in which case the full SSC would review).	Spring/Summer 2021?	Council/TBD	CPS Subcommittee Members	NA	CPSMT CPSAS	Griffin
6	Groundfish STAR Panel 1	May 3-7, 2021	Council/TBD	TBD	2 CIE	GMT GAP	DeVore

7	SSC Groundfish Subcommittee	June 21, 2021	Council/Vancouver, WA	Groundfish Subcommittee Members	NA	GMT GAP	DeVore
8	Groundfish STAR Panel 2	July 12-16, 2021	Council/TBD	TBD	2 CIE	GMT GAP	DeVore
9	Groundfish STAR Panel 3	July 26-30, 2021	Council/TBD	TBD	2 CIE	GMT GAP	DeVore
10	7 th National Meeting of the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee of the Council Coordination Committee	2021?	NPFMC/Sitka, AK	4 TBD	NA	NA	DeVore
11	Groundfish mop-up STAR Panel, if needed	September 27-October 1	Council/TBD	TBD	2 CIE	GMT GAP	DeVore
12	Proposed Workshop for Conducting Nearshore ROV Surveys	Fall 2020/Winter 2021?	Council/TBD	TBD	TBD	GMT GAP	DeVore

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