

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
FIXED GEAR CATCH SHARE REVIEW – SCOPING

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) received a report from Dr. Cameron Speir (Southwest Fisheries Science Center) on the outcome of the joint meeting of the Economics Subcommittee and Groundfish Subcommittee of the SSC held via webinar on May 26, 2021. The two subcommittees reviewed a draft outline of the proposed topics for the upcoming Limited Entry Fixed Gear (LEFG) Program review. The report of the subcommittees is appended to this statement. The SSC also received a brief presentation from Jim Seger and Jessi Doerpinghaus summarizing the upcoming LEFG review.

The SSC offered several technical recommendations to the review team. First, the proposed analysis of whether high-grading is occurring would be improved by comparing the distributions of retained fish in observed and unobserved trips. This would quantify whether there is an observer effect in retention behavior.

Second, little of the proposed analysis characterizes the LEFG program impacts at the community level. Similarly, there is no analysis of impacts or description of crew or processors. A description and analysis of impacts on these stakeholders is needed. A recent survey of fishing industry participants by the Northwest Fishery Science Center could be a source of vessel owner demographics and impacts of the owner on board requirement.

Third, obtaining data on permit prices should be a priority for the upcoming review. Permit prices are an indicator of expected future profits in the fishery. They are also an indicator of the ease of entry into the fishery by new participants.

The SSC also discussed how it could be involved in the LEFG review. The SSC could review draft analyses for determining best scientific information available, whether current data collections are adequate to support the program evaluation, and in recommending research and data needs.

ECONOMICS AND GROUND FISH SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND  
STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
FIXED GEAR CATCH SHARE REVIEW – SCOPING

The Economics Subcommittee and Groundfish Subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (Subcommittees) held a joint meeting via webinar on May 26, 2021. The purpose of the meeting was to consider two items relating to groundfish management. The first item was a review of the Quota Share Owner Survey to determine whether it is suitable for use in decision-making by the Council. The Subcommittees did not see any major problems with the data collection or analysis and recommends that the Council and relevant advisory bodies see this information at some future date. The second item was a preliminary outline of the upcoming Limited Entry Fixed Gear (LEFG) Fishery five-year review.

At its April 2021 meeting, the SSC had also planned for the subcommittees to review an analysis of proposed alternatives for limiting the use of fixed gear in the trawl individual fishing quota fishery gear switching. However, the Council has not yet defined alternatives for this item and therefore the proposed analysis is not ready for review. This report summarizes the Subcommittees discussion of the LEFG Fishery five-year review.

The Subcommittees received a presentation from Jim Seger and Jessi Doerpinghaus outlining proposed analyses for the upcoming LEFG Fishery five-year review. The Subcommittees also received a draft outline of the proposed topics that will be included in the June 2021 briefing book under Agenda Item G.2. The LEFG fishery is a catch share program implemented prior to 2007 and therefore the Magnuson Stevens Act requires program reviews every five years. The last review was completed in June 2014. At the June 2021 Council meeting, the Council will scope content issues for the review and provide guidance on a timeline for completion. The subcommittees offered several items for the analysts and the Council to consider as the scoping process for the LEFG five-year review continues.

Section 2.1.8 of the draft outline contains an analysis of whether high-grading is occurring by comparing the size distributions of retained and discarded fish. This analysis would be improved by also comparing the distributions of retained fish in observed and unobserved trips. This would quantify whether there is an observer effect in retention behavior.

Nearly all of the program impacts are characterized in terms of vessel owners and operators. Very little of the proposed analysis characterizes the program impacts or fishery at the community level. Similarly, there is no analysis of impacts or description of crew or processors. Description and analysis of impacts on these stakeholders is likely of interest. A recent survey of fishing industry participants by the Northwest Fishery Science Center could be a source of crew demographics and impacts of the owner on board requirement.

Permit prices are discussed in general terms and the analysts are considering more detailed analysis of permit prices in the review. Better data and consistent tracking of permit prices was a recommendation of the 2014 review and is listed as a future research need. The analysts note that reliable permit data do not exist and propose some methods of obtaining it. The Subcommittees recommend that obtaining data on permit price be a priority for the upcoming review. In addition to being an indicator of expected future profits in the fishery, permit prices are also an indicator of the ease of entry into the fishery by new participants.