

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON STOCK DEFINITIONS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed options and approaches for defining stocks in the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

The SSC discussed the alternative uses of the word “stock”, noting that for these purposes “stock” refers to a status determination unit/management unit rather than an assessment unit. Assessment areas should take into account, but not be dictated by, status determination/management boundaries, while status must be reported at the status determination/management unit.

A variety of information may be useful for defining stocks for status determination and management. This includes a suite of data on species biology and distribution, as well as information on data availability across space. Properly considering the available information will require a multi-stage process, including development and review of a proposed framework for defining stocks, application of said framework to FMP species, review of results, and Council deliberation and decision making. Option 2 does not provide adequate time for this process, and therefore would largely involve formalizing the status quo, while the more deliberative approach of Option 1 would still need to be undertaken at a future date.

Changes in stock definitions may occur in the future due to, for example, new or improved data or shifts in ranges due to climate change.

PFMC
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