

SUMMARY MINUTES Scientific and Statistical Committee

Pacific Fishery Management Council
Doubletree Hotel - Columbia River
Deschutes Room
1401 N Hayden Island Drive
Portland, OR 97217
(503) 283-2111
April 3 -4, 2000

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8 A.M. by Chair, Cynthia Thomson. Dr. Don Mclsaac, Executive Director, provided some opening comments and noted for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) the key issues where the Council would look to the SSC for guidance: Salmon Methodology Reviews, Harvest Rate Policy, Rebuilding Plans, and the Plan Amendment to Address Bycatch.

The agenda was approved.

Members in Attendance

Mr. Alan Byrne, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Nampa, ID
Mr. Robert Conrad, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Olympia, WA
Dr. Ramon Conser, National Marine Fisheries Service, La Jolla, CA
Dr. Susan Hanna, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR
Dr. Kevin Hill, California Department of Fish and Game, La Jolla, CA
Mr. Tom Jagielo, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA
Dr. Peter Lawson, National Marine Fisheries Service, Newport, OR
Dr. Stephen Ralston, National Marine Fisheries Service, Tiburon, CA
Ms. Cynthia Thomson, National Marine Fisheries Service, Santa Cruz, CA
Dr. Shijie Zhou, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland, OR

Members Absent

Dr. Robert Francis, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
Dr. Gary Stauffer, National Marine Fisheries Service, Seattle, WA
Dr. Gilbert Sylvia, Hatfield Marine Science Center, Newport, OR
Dr. Richard Young, Crescent City, CA

SSC Administrative Matters

The SSC reviewed subcommittee assignments from the past year and determined the composition of the subcommittees for 2000. Committee assignments are generally unchanged from 1999, except for the addition of Dr. Ray Conser to the Coastal Pelagic Species Subcommittee. Assignments are as follows:

Salmon	Groundfish	Coastal Pelagic Species	Economic
Alan Byrne	Ray Conser, <i>Chair</i>	Ray Conser	Susan Hanna, <i>Chair</i>
Robert Conrad	Tom Jagielo	Robert Francis, <i>Chair</i>	Gil Sylvia
Kevin Hill	Steve Ralston	Tom Jagielo	Cynthia Thomson
Pete Lawson, <i>Chair</i>	Gary Stauffer	Steve Ralston	Richard Young
Shijie Zhou	Gil Sylvia	Gary Stauffer	

Open Discussion

The SSC discussed the scope and content of the upcoming meeting with members of the Salmon Technical Team. This meeting will be held in conjunction with the September 2000 Council meeting. The purpose is to provide the SSC a better understanding of the Salmon management process. Content that was discussed included: overview, with as much detail as possible; technical stock size projections and stock size estimates; forecasting estimates; natural versus hatchery stocks; stocks of major concern; management models; stock distribution; description of fisheries on Council-managed stocks and fisheries on non-Council-managed stocks; explanation of how the various management models "fit together;" descriptions of the various regions involved (e.g., Columbia River, Puget Sound, Klamath Management Zone). The SSC also discussed and agreed that it would be beneficial for Council members (if interested) to attend this informational session.

The SSC then briefly discussed their relationship within the Council family, focusing on the perceived lack of understanding (by Council members and Council advisory committees) about the role of the SSC in the Council process. Several suggestions for improving levels of awareness and understanding were provided, including: initiating more informal interaction between the Council and advisory committees, and relying on Council staff to orient and educate technical committees about the role and purpose of the SSC.

Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Comments to the Council

The following text contains SSC comments to the Council. (Related SSC discussion not included in written comment to the Council is provided in italicized text).

Salmon Management

Methodology Reviews for 2000

Mr. Bill Tweit of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) reviewed the current status of the coho cohort analysis project. This is a cooperative project between WDFW, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Northwest Indian Fish Commission, and Treaty Tribes of Western Washington. The objective of this project is to reconstruct coho salmon cohorts for the 1986 through 1991 time period. One important product of this project will be estimates of exploitation rates which should be less biased than those currently used by the coho fishery regulatory assessment model (FRAM). This project is ongoing and has no projected completion date. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) identifies this as a very important project that requires completion. The database produced by the project should be the basis for any new models developed to address fishery management, including coho FRAM. The SSC recommends this project be given the highest priority by the agencies involved and completed as soon as possible. The SSC looks forward to reviewing the results of this project in the near future.

There has been no recent progress on the new Klamath Ocean Harvest Model (KOHM). This new model is badly needed and should receive the highest priority for completion. The SSC expects to see documentation of the new KOHM in September, prior to the October Council meeting.

In November, the SSC was informed that changes to the chinook FRAM to accommodate selective fisheries were not complete. The SSC needs a demonstration of the performance of the new chinook FRAM as part of its review process. Review of the new chinook FRAM needs to occur in October if the model is to be used for management in the 2001 season.

Three specific areas of possible bias related to the data used in the current chinook FRAM were brought to the attention of the SSC. These were:

1. Coded wire tags used to represent Lower Columbia River wild chinook stocks.
2. Spring chinook stock composition in the non-treaty troll fishery.
3. Encounter and shaker mortality rates in the treaty troll summer chinook fishery.

The demonstration of the performance of the new chinook FRAM should address these issues, but should not be limited to these three items. It should be much broader and include a demonstration of the robustness of the model to changes in the data and other model parameters.

Documentation of changes to methodologies proposed for the 2001 salmon management season should be submitted to the Council office no later than September 29, 2000. This will ensure the SSC has adequate time for proper review.

It has been at least eight years since the SSC last reviewed the methodologies used for preseason salmon abundance forecasts. Methodologies and data used for many of these forecasts have changed substantially since that time. The SSC recognizes that formal documentation of the forecast methodologies is a significant project for the agencies involved. The SSC anticipates conducting reviews of coast-wide forecast methodologies for coho and chinook salmon in October 2001 and requests that affected agencies plan accordingly.

Identification of Stocks not Meeting Escapement Goals for Three Consecutive Years

Mr. Doug Milward of the Salmon Technical Team (STT) identified stocks that failed to meet their escapement goals for the past three years. All stocks that failed to meet escapement goals, with the exception of Queets River fall coho, were exempted from the overfishing criteria. Exempted stocks are either harvested at rates less than 5% in Council-managed fisheries or listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

The Queets River fall coho escapement has been less than the 5,800 floor the past three years. During this time period Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Quinault Indian Nation agreed on yearly escapement targets that were less than 5,800 fish. In one of the three years the coho escapement met the target. It is our understanding this stock would not be considered overfished under the current plan; however, under Amendment 14 it would qualify as overfished.

In general, setting the escapement goal equal to the escapement floor is a strategy with a high risk of falling beneath the floor. The mandatory overfishing reviews and rebuilding plans are an expensive consequence of such management. The Scientific and Statistical Committee recommends the Council manage fisheries with buffers above the floors. This principle also applies to groundfish and other fisheries.

Groundfish Management

Harvest Rate Policy

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) commends the Groundfish Harvest Rate Policy Workshop Panel (Panel) for the high caliber of technical review it has brought to bear on the question of West Coast groundfish productivity. Through written papers, presentations, and a robust interactive dialog, the workshop comprehensively reviewed the best available scientific information on appropriate "risk-neutral" proxies of FMSY. The twelve written contributions to the workshop will be submitted for publication in the primary scientific literature.

The draft Panel report 1) summarized the scientific and management background of the harvest proxy issue, 2) concisely explained some areas of common confusion, and 3) recommended default groundfish F_{spr} harvest rates for Pacific whiting ($F_{40\%}$), *Sebastes* and *Sebastolobus* ($F_{50\%}$), flatfish ($F_{40\%}$), and other groundfish ($F_{45\%}$). The report notes these recommendations were not developed as precautionary changes, but instead they attempt to correct previous estimates of productivity.

The SSC notes that qualitatively different levels of uncertainty are associated with the Panel's proxy estimates. Further, the SSC recommends the Council develop precautionary adjustments that reflect these varying levels of uncertainty when developing target F values for the fishery. Precaution is warranted, because 1) while the proxy values were recommended as "risk-neutral" values for the groups, some individual species in the aggregations are less productive than the average and may be overfished if the group proxy is applied, and 2) estimation and process error result in the chance of exceeding the

true FMSY value for any individual species, even if the “best estimate” proxy is applied.

The SSC's preliminary review supports the Panel's consensus findings. The SSC will complete its review of the FMSY proxy issue in June.

Rebuilding Plans for Canary Rockfish and Cowcod

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed the proposed schedule for development of rebuilding plans for canary rockfish and cowcod. Supplemental Attachment B.10.a. was not available for review, but Mr. Jim Glock was present to brief the SSC on this schedule.

The canary rockfish and cowcod rebuilding plan authors will be performing the analyses and drafting technical reports for review at the June Council meeting. Since the Council will need to take final action on these rebuilding plans in September, the SSC emphasizes these draft plans should be completed in time for adequate review prior to the June meeting. The SSC's Groundfish Subcommittee would like an opportunity to review the draft rebuilding plans prior to the June meeting, with inclusion in the June Council meeting Briefing Book as an absolute deadline. In addition, the SSC would like the authors to present their analyses to the committee at the June meeting.

The SSC also discussed the status and schedules for lingcod, Pacific ocean perch, and any other species that may fall into the overfished category and require a rebuilding plan. Results from new assessments should be incorporated into rebuilding projections, and any modifications to rebuilding plans for these species should be reviewed by the SSC either at the June or September Council meetings.

Status of Groundfish Strategic Plan

Ms. Debra Nudelman from Resolve, Inc. gave the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) an update on the status of the groundfish strategic plan. The SSC is encouraged by the progress the Ad-Hoc Groundfish Strategic Plan Committee has made on the plan. The SSC recognizes the importance of this report and looks forward to the draft report in June.

Plan Amendment to Address Bycatch and Management Measure Issues

Ms. Yvonne de Reynier [National Marine Fisheries Service] presented a review of highlights of the draft amendment 13 to the groundfish fishery management plan (FMP).

There is little scientific confirmation of the effectiveness of current measures which have been implemented to reduce bycatch. In the future, bycatch reduction provisions should be accompanied by appropriate monitoring activities to determine their effectiveness. The alternatives chosen under issue 3 (Bycatch Reduction Provisions) should reference which reporting methodologies under issue 2 (Standardized Reporting Methodologies) would be appropriate.

The Scientific and Statistical Committee questioned the potential efficacy of certain alternatives listed in the draft FMP amendment. Specifically, Alternative 2 under issue 2, a stand-alone mandatory logbook program, is unlikely to be an acceptable reporting methodology, because it would not provide verifiable estimates of bycatch. Alternatives 3 and 4 include provisions for verifying bycatch through onboard observation. Under issue 3, it is unclear how alternative 2 would provide adequate bycatch reduction, because it relies on a groundfish strategic plan which has not yet been completed.

Research and Data Needs

Mr. Jim Seger (Council staff) reviewed for the SSC the Council Operating Procedures for updating the Council's Research and Data Needs document. This process relies heavily on SSC guidance, especially from the various SSC subcommittees. The general process is:

- 1. The Council's management teams and advisory subpanels provide recommendations for needed research and data to Mr. Seger;*

2. *Mr. Seger works with the subcommittee chairs to facilitate full subcommittee review of the recommendations well in advance of the June meeting;*
3. *Mr. Seger compiles the recommendations for the Council's June Briefing Book;*
4. *Management teams and advisory subpanels review the material to ensure it reflects their initial recommendations;*
5. *At the June meeting, the full SSC reviews the recommendations and provides comments and advice to the Council;*
6. *The Council takes action on the SSC's recommendations;*
7. *Mr. Seger revises the Council's Research and Data Needs document.*

Marine Reserves

Mr. Jim Seger reported on progress to date in developing the objectives and conceptual framework for the use of marine reserves. He reviewed the technical analysis used in Phase-1 of the process and the Council decision-making process for adopting reserves as a management tool. He noted that his intent in presenting the preliminary draft report was to move the process forward by stimulating committee and Council discussion prior to a final decision on Phase-I in June 2000.

Public Comment

Dr. Joshua Sladek-Nowlis, Center for Marine Conservation, spoke to the need for incorporating precaution into the Council's estimations of maximum sustainable yield (MSY). He noted that MSY should be treated as a maximum allowable catch, not a target total allowable catch. He suggested that the SSC provide for the Council illustrative comments and scientific evaluation of uncertainty and risk. It was his opinion that the SSC should provide management options to the Council, including examples and illustrations of level of risk-aversion in each option.

Adjournment

The SSC adjourned at approximately 4:30 P.M., Tuesday, April 4, 2000.

PFMC
05/19/00