

SUMMARY MINUTES
Scientific and Statistical Committee

Pacific Fishery Management Council
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Drake I Room
1221 Chess Drive
Foster City, CA 94404
650-570-5700
June 14-15, 2004

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m. Dr. John Coon briefed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on priority agenda items.

Subcommittee assignments for 2004 are detailed in the table at the end of this document.

Members in Attendance

Mr. Tom Barnes, California Department on Fish and Game, La Jolla, CA
Mr. Steve Berkeley, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA
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. Michael Dalton, California State University, Monterey Bay, CA
Dr. Martin Dorn, National Marine Fisheries Service, Seattle, WA
Dr. Kevin Hill, National Marine Fisheries Service, La Jolla, CA
Mr. Tom Jagielo, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA
Dr. Han-Lin Lai, National Marine Fisheries Service, Seattle, WA
Dr. Peter Lawson, National Marine Fisheries Service, Newport, OR
Dr. André Punt, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
Dr. Hans Radtke, Yachats, OR
Dr. Stephen Ralston, National Marine Fisheries Service, Santa Cruz, CA
Dr. David Sampson, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Newport, OR alt. for Dr. Shijie Zhou
Ms. Cynthia Thomson, National Marine Fisheries Service, Santa Cruz, CA

Scientific and Statistical Committee Comments to the Council

The following is a compilation of June 2004 SSC reports to the Council.

Council Administrative Matters

B.2. Council Communication Plan - Phase I (Communication During Council Session)

The SSC reviewed the Council Communication Plan – Phase I (Exhibit B.2.a, Attachment 1) that focuses on communication in the Council chamber during Council meetings. As noted in the plan, the SSC recognizes that tracking Council motions and decisions can be confusing. The Council's Decision Document provides helpful information, but often, the text of complicated motions is not included. Measures to clarify the policy decision process outlined in the plan would be beneficial to all parties.

The SSC notes that input from the technical teams and the SSC to the Communication Enhancement Team will be important in Phases II and III of the plan, especially as it relates to the use of scientific and technical information within the Council family.

Groundfish Management

C.4. Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

The SSC Groundfish and Economics Subcommittees met May 24-25 to review the fishing gear impact model component of the analytical framework for the EFH EIS. Dr. Michael Dalton (Chair, SSC Economics Subcommittee) presented a report of this meeting to the SSC. Strengths and weaknesses of the current version of the fishing impacts model and data were described, recommendations were made concerning appropriate use of the fishing impacts model for EFH analyses, and data needs were considered in view of the ongoing requirements to evaluate impacts on EFH. A final version of the report will be available in time for the Ad Hoc Groundfish Fishery Management Plan EIS Oversight Committee's consideration of preliminary alternatives.

The SSC considered the utility of the fishing impacts model at its current state of development. The SSC concluded that further development of the model and additional data on fishing effort will be necessary before it can endorse use of the fishing impacts model for the purpose of identifying where adverse fishing impacts occur. The SSC does not recommend use of the current EFH fishing impacts model in the development and evaluation of management alternatives.

The report today is to inform the Council's consideration of approving the fishing impacts model. The SSC highlighted the following critical issues about the fishing impacts model:

1. Data from trawl logbooks are the only coast wide source of spatial data on fishing effort.
2. Values for a key tuning parameter in the model are arbitrary.
3. Spatial inconsistencies with the resolution of the fishing impacts model and impacts on habitat.

The SSC acknowledges the complexity of these issues and, specifically, the importance of data gaps. However, each of these issues severely limits the ability of the model to address impacts on EFH.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) package developed by the EFH analytical team contains a wide range of tools for habitat mapping and evaluation of potential fishing impacts. Data used with the fishing impacts model (trawl effort data, gear sensitivity, and habitat recovery matrices) are informative on their own. A useful set of maps based on these data could be developed to aid formulation and evaluation of EFH management alternatives. For example, polygons of the most sensitive habitat types could be overlaid with the trawl start coordinates to provide an index of potential trawl impacts. In addition, maps that associate habitat type to sensitivity and recovery for different gears could be used to develop and evaluate mitigation options.

The SSC examined some of the habitat suitability maps produced by the EFH identification model that are posted on the Council's website. Although the EFH identification model was previously endorsed by the SSC, detailed results were not available at the time of the SSC review. The SSC has concerns about the habitat suitability maps for several species (e.g., cowcod, California scorpionfish, lingcod) which show unexpected patterns that need to be explored further. The SSC recommends that maps for individual species be reviewed before use, and that a formal review process be developed for this purpose, possibly by the EFH Technical Review Committee.

C.6. Tentative Adoption of Groundfish Management Measures for 2005-2006 Fisheries

No SSC report.

C.7. Monitoring Program Alternatives for the Shore-based Pacific Whiting Fishery

No SSC report.

Enforcement Issues

D.1. Preliminary Report on Contact to Violation Ratio In Groundfish Recreational Fisheries

Mike Cenci (WDFW), Jorge Gross (CDFG), and Dave Cleary (OSP) of the Council's Enforcement Consultants (EC) group presented data summaries collected by their respective state enforcement agencies in 2003 and discussed the need to consider contact to violation ratios to adjust total mortality taken in the recreational fisheries for groundfish. Although the compliance data were restricted in coverage by area, season, and port, they illustrate the complexity of the sampling problem.

Based on information presented to the SSC the overall violation rates, including fishing without a permit, were within the general range of 5% to 10%. The RecFIN intercept sampling program is likely to measure violations due to ignorance of bag limits and minimum size regulations, but intentional violations are likely to be missed and could be the focus of additional data collection by the EC group. Additional information is needed to evaluate whether a generic adjustment

factor could be developed and reasonably applied to all fisheries. For example, do compliance rates differ between charter versus private boat trips or between overages of canary rockfish versus ling cod? Also, at issue is whether the adjustment factor would be applied to the recreational landings or to the number of angler trips or the number of fishing permits. The SSC suggests that developing adjustments for discard mortality is as important a topic as developing a complicated adjustment for illegal catch.

The SSC encourages the EC group to continue taking snapshots of compliance in the recreational groundfish fishery given the tight harvest constraints that are currently in effect.

Coastal Pelagic Species Management

F.2. Pacific Mackerel Harvest Guideline for the 2004/2005 Season

Dr. Kevin Hill discussed the 2004-2005 Pacific mackerel harvest guideline (HG) with the SSC. The recommended HG is 13,268 mt based on the maximum sustainable yield control rule in Amendment 8 to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) fishery management plan. The SSC notes that the HG is based on the same stock assessment methodology and harvest control rule used in several previous years, with the addition of one additional year of catch data, and new or revised data for four of the six indices of abundance. Over-estimation of biomass for the last year of the assessment period is a chronic feature of the Pacific mackerel assessment. For example, the biomass estimate for 2003 based on the 2004 assessment (46,121 mt) is lower than the estimate of this biomass based on the 2003 assessment (68,924 mt). The estimate of biomass for 2003 is higher than that for 2002 due primarily to the large 2001 recruitment.

The bulk of Pacific mackerel spawning occurs off Baja California while larval surveys are conducted in the California Bight. Therefore, data used to develop abundance indices for use in the stock assessment cover only a small proportion of the area of spawning. Data from the Investigaciones Mexicanas de la Corriente de California (IMECOCAL) program could provide information that covers a larger proportion of the spawning area, which could then be used in future assessments of Pacific mackerel as well as Pacific sardine and bocaccio.

The methodology on which this assessment is based is not fully documented in the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report, precluding a detailed review by the SSC. This assessment will, however, be reviewed, along with that of Pacific sardine, during a CPS Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel meeting in 21-25 June 2004. The control rule used to set Harvest Guidelines for Pacific mackerel was established over 20 years ago. The SSC highlights that there may be value in reviewing the basis for this control rule during a future CPS STAR Panel.

Marine Protected Areas

G.1. Federal Waters Portion of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

The SSC received a report from Mr. Chris Mobley, Sanctuary Manager, on the status of the working document being developed as a draft EIS to implement a network of marine reserves and conservation areas within the federal waters portion of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS). Currently, the CINMS has a network of marine reserves inside California

State waters (within 3 nm of the islands). This document addresses the sanctuary's proposal to extend the current reserve boundaries to federal waters and revise the schedule for submission of a draft EIS. To facilitate the ability of the Council's Ad Hoc Channel Islands Marine Reserve Committee to meet this schedule, the SSC Marine Reserves Subcommittee is prepared to schedule a meeting with CINMS and their analysts later this summer. The purpose of this meeting would be to provide a more thorough review of the working draft and supporting documents.

The SSC notes the goals and purpose statement has been considerably revised from the goals used by the Marine Reserves Work Group (MRWG) to establish reserves in state waters at CINMS. In the current draft, the principal justification has been shifted away from a focus on ecosystem and fishery benefits to a more exclusive focus on protection of the ecological communities and processes, biodiversity, and physical and biogenic habitats within the sanctuary. This shift in emphasis is more aligned with the goals of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act.

The SSC recognizes this is a working draft with a number of sections incomplete.

The SSC offers the following suggestions to strengthen the document:

1. The need and rationale for extending the state-approved marine reserves into federal waters should be highlighted and moved into the introduction, which is the purpose of the proposed action.
2. The development of the three alternatives and their rationales need to be better explained and justified. The differences among the alternatives appear to be largely a matter of spatial extent of closures, but the document offers little guidance on how to evaluate the alternatives in their ability to achieve the objectives.
3. A table that ranks the effectiveness of each alternative in achieving each of the goals bulleted in Section 1.3 (page 7) should be included.
4. The level of fishing activity within CINMS may have changed, since state reserves were established in 2003 depending on the extent to which displaced effort left CINMS waters. If information is available regarding the extent of such displacement, this information should be used to formulate a new socioeconomic baseline for the analysis of alternatives. At minimum, uncertainty regarding the baseline should at least be acknowledged.

G.2. Guidelines for Review of Marine Reserves Issues

The SSC discussed the latest draft of its white paper (i.e., "Marine Reserves: Objectives, Rationales, Management Implications and Regulatory Requirements" [Exhibit G.2.b, Attachment 1, June 2004]). The latest draft includes a significant number of revisions that were made in response to comments received at the March Council meeting in Tacoma, Washington. Moreover, significant public comment on the white paper was also received for this meeting (Exhibit G.2.d, Public Comment, June 2004), and it is evident the document has generated considerable interest. The goals of the SSC's white paper,¹ which pertains to marine reserve proposals that come before the Council, are to, (1) describe the rationale underlying a number of commonly cited objectives of marine reserves, (2) discuss the implications of marine reserves to

¹ To clarify the purpose and intent of the white paper, the SSC has decided to change the title to "Marine Reserves: Objective, Rationales, Fishery Management Implications, and Regulatory Requirements."

fishery management, and (3) describe SSC expectations regarding the technical content of proposals considered by the Council, whether internally or externally generated.

It is important to note that much of the Public Comment (Exhibit G.2.d) was developed in response to the SSC's February draft white paper, and the current June 2004 version has addressed several of those concerns. Even so, in the time available the SSC was unable to provide a thorough evaluation of the complete record of Public Comment, some of which was technical in nature. Given the importance of the white paper to the Council and the public, and the desire of the SSC to carefully consider all points of view before finalizing the document, the SSC decided to undertake another revision to the document over the summer. To facilitate that revision, the SSC requests that all public comment on the June 2004 version of the white paper be submitted to the Council by June 30th. The next revision should be available in the briefing materials for the September meeting, at which time the SSC expects to forward the white paper to the Council for adoption.

G.3. Update on Miscellaneous Marine Protected Area Activities

Dr. Churchill Grimes briefed the SSC on efforts to integrate marine protected area (MPA) concepts with those of fisheries science and fisheries management. In particular, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Santa Cruz Lab and the NOAA National Marine Protected Areas Center – Science Institute (NMPAC-SI) are convening a technical working group to develop the scientific information necessary to integrate MPAs within the broader context of fisheries. Expertise within this working group will be broadly based. Members will include ecologists, stock assessment scientists, economists, and policy experts. Working group projects will be multidisciplinary from inception rather than the more traditional approach of carrying out research along disciplinary lines and attempting to integrate findings only after the fact. Previous SSC statements and the SSC's "white paper" on marine reserves have advocated such an approach. The SSC supports the formation of the NMPAC-SI working group and suggests that, if invited, members of the SSC's Marine Reserves Subcommittee should be encouraged to participate fully in the working group.

Dr. Grimes also presented a comprehensive list of MPA topics for possible consideration by the working group. Nearly all of these topics are important and it may be difficult to prioritize the list. From the SSC's perspective, it may be less important to struggle with priorities than to ensure that whatever projects are first pursued, they be approached in an integrated fashion, cutting across the appropriate disciplines. A project that may be of particular interest to the Council is the development of a flexible stock assessment model that explicitly allows MPAs to be used as one of several tools available in its forward projection module. Such a model would allow the Council to examine the effect of MPA-based management in conjunction with more traditional management measures.

The SSC recognizes the NMPAC-SI is a national program and as such, will be dealing with many diverse issues from across the nation. It will be important to maintain the "West Coast" perspective in this process. Case studies focusing on the Channel Islands, for example, may be ideally suited to keep West Coast specific issues at the forefront.

Finally, the SSC encourages Dr. Grimes or other NMPAC-SI steering committee members to

periodically update the SSC on the working group progress and related issues.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment – The SSC adjourned at approximately 5 p.m., Tuesday, June 15, 2004.

PFMC
08/26/04

SSC Subcommittee Assignments for 2004

Salmon	Groundfish	CPS	HMS	Economic	Marine Reserves
Alan Byrne	Steve Berkeley	Tom Barnes	Tom Barnes	Michael Dalton	Tom Barnes
Robert Conrad	Ray Conser	Alan Byrne	Steve Berkeley	Han-Lin Lai	Steve Berkeley
Kevin Hill	Michael Dalton	Michael Dalton	Alan Byrne	Hans Radtke	Ray Conser
Pete Lawson	Martin Dorn	Ray Conser	Robert Conrad	Cynthia Thomson	Michael Dalton
Shijie Zhou	Tom Jagielo	Tom Jagielo	Ray Conser		Martin Dorn
Hans Radtke	Han-Lin Lai	André Punt	Kevin Hill		Tom Jagielo
	André Punt	Shijie Zhou	André Punt		Pete Lawson
	Steve Ralston		Hans Radtke		André Punt
					Steve Ralston
					Cynthia Thomson

Bold denotes Subcommittee Chairperson