

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
STOCK ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY REVIEW - FINAL TOPICS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed a proposal for groundfish stock assessment methodology review from the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission regarding the use of Fourier Transformed Near-Infrared Spectrophotometry (FT-NIRS) to increase groundfish ageing throughput (Agenda Item G.3.a, Supplemental NWFSC Report 1, September 2023). The NWFSC and Southwest Fisheries Science Center have begun processing samples for analysis, including species from other regions. This is part of a National Marine Fisheries Service national initiative, which brought up the question of whether a more national forum for review is more appropriate.

In the interest of evaluating the species for which the method is applicable, analysis of a broad suite of species encompassing varying life histories would be beneficial. While the focus of the proposal was stocks planned for assessment in 2025, the list of species could be expanded to encompass the diverse life histories of roundfish, rockfish, and flatfish as well as including short- and long-lived species, and easier and more difficult species to age. Understanding the factors that affect ageing with FT-NIRS may help inform the species for which the methods can be successfully attempted in the future. The SSC supports review of the proposed methods. While review of the methodology in June 2024 has been tentatively proposed, it can be delayed until late summer if additional time is needed to process otoliths and analyze the resulting data.

PFMC  
09/10/23