

# GMT feedback on the 2023 assessment cycle and suggested revisions for the 2025 cycle

January 5, 2024

## Data

- 1. Issue:** The GMT representative is generally not included in any conversations with the state data representatives when compiling the data for use in the assessment. This can lead to potential data sources being accidentally excluded (e.g., catches in the at-sea fishery) and makes it more difficult to review the data being used.
  - a. Solution:** Request that the STAT cc the GMT representative on all data conversations with the state representatives and/or invite the GMT representative to attend any state specific data meetings the STAT holds.
- 2. Issue:** The pre-assessment data workshops are incredibly helpful. However, the presentations are often high-level which can lead to issues where missing data are not identified at that time.
  - a. Solution:** The GMT will work to create a data checklist for each species assessed and will communicate with the STAT prior to the pre-assessment data workshops to ensure that all fishery-dependent data sources are being identified. The GMT also would like to request a post-data workshop pre-STAR panel meeting/check-in with the STAT to ensure that all data sources have been identified and that the GMT has a high-level understanding of how the data are being used in the assessment. This is aimed to reduce or eliminate last minute questions during the STAR panel.
- 3. Issue:** There were several situations this cycle where issues with the historical catch streams were not identified until late in the process (e.g., missing at-sea hake catches for shortspine thornyhead).
  - a. Solution:** The requested revision under items 1 and 2 in the section should help eliminate this issue but the GMT would like to also request that the STAT share the finalized catch stream for review with the GMT. This could be done sometime after the data deadline but prior to the STAR panel and could fully close the loop on this issue. The GMT can work with the assessment authors and the GFSC to determine the appropriate timeline and to add any potential revisions to the groundfish Terms of Reference (ToR).

## Assessment Review

- 4. Issue:** The table with projected OFLs/ABCs/ACLs is not required in the draft document for the STAR panel and at times these values are only shared during the final days of the review. This makes it difficult for the GMT to evaluate the impact of the new assessment for future management and provide feedback to the STAT on potential catch streams.

  - a. Solution:** Amend the ToR to require that this table be included in the STAR panel draft. This would facilitate the GMT requesting alternative harvest control rule projections as early as possible in the process.
- 5. Issue:** The primary goal of the STAR panel is to conduct a rigorous scientific review of the assessment which is outside the GMT's role at the meeting. It is unclear when it is appropriate during the STAR panel for the representative to ask questions or request clarification while respecting the time constraints during the review week.

  - a. Solution:** Work with the GFSC-SSC to revise the ToR to include a specific time during each day of the review for the GMT representative to ask questions and/or for clarification. However, we request that the ToR also clarify that this is not the only time the GMT representative may ask questions or seek clarification.

## Revisions to the Terms of Reference

- 6. Issue:** The first paragraph in section 5.7 states that the GMT should provide catch streams. The fourth paragraph then clarifies that the GMT should be providing catch streams potentially in the final model year, the initial two projection years, and the subsequent projection years.

  - a. Solution:** Clarify in the first paragraph what years of the catch stream are being referred to.
- 7. Issue:** This fall there were two situations where states wanted to request revisions to the GMT-provided removal assumptions. The lack of clear process and a timeline as to when revisions need to be provided and reviewed, and by whom, led to confusion and delayed the SSC's ability to approve the OFLs.

  - a. Solution:** Amend the ToR to provide guidance about when these requests need to be submitted by and the documentation required for GMT review. If the expectation is that the GMT must review and approve removal assumptions that are requested by another body, the ToR should make this clear.

## General Ideas for Communication Around Assessment Data and Results

The below item is not an issue that we are requesting be addressed via ToR or process revisions but rather a general idea that arose during discussions that may be useful for assessors to consider during future assessments, if appropriate.

- 8. Issue:** Variation in abundance or density of a stock across its range may lead to varying anecdotal information on abundance by local fishermen.
  - a. Solution:** If the data are available, presenting both a map of where data have been collected that will be used within the assessment and raw numbers of observations or effort by area may allow for better understanding of varying abundance across an area. For example, [figure 19](#) in the copper rockfish assessment showed where the various survey information being considered was collected and [figure 27](#) showed raw CPUE trends by area and protection south of Point Conception. This would only be possible for select species being assessed and would depend upon the data available and the associated confidentiality. The GMT is not suggesting any revision to the ToR.