

Scientific and Statistical Committee's Groundfish Subcommittee: Groundfish Assessment 2023 Process Review, 2025-2026 Terms of Reference/Accepted Practices Guidelines for Groundfish Stock Assessments

Pacific Fishery Management Council
Via Webinar

January 17-18, 2024

Instructions for how to connect to the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) Groundfish Subcommittee (GFSC) webinar will be posted on the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (PFMC) [website](#) prior to the first day of the meeting.

SSC Subcommittee meetings are open to the public and public comment periods have been scheduled. Additional public comments may be taken at the discretion of the Chair. Times on this agenda are subject to change once the meeting begins. Committee member work assignments are noted in parentheses for each agenda item; the first name listed is the discussion leader and the second is the rapporteur.

The purpose of the SSC GFSC meeting includes, a.) review proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Process for 2025 and 2026, and Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis for 2025 and 2026, that will inform the process for conducting and reviewing groundfish assessments and rebuilding analyses in the next cycle, b.) review proposed changes to the Accepted Practices Guidelines for Stock Assessments in 2025 and 2026, which is a compilation of guidelines for groundfish stock assessment scientists, and c.) to review and evaluate the 2023-2024 groundfish stock assessment review process to solicit process improvements for future reviews. Stock assessment teams and review participants are encouraged to attend, as well as members of the Council's groundfish advisory bodies to prepare their recommendations for the Council.

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 – 8:00 AM

A. Call to Order (8:00 a.m.)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Call to Order and Introductions | John Field |
| 2. Webinar Instructions | Marlene A. Bellman |
| 3. Overview of Webinar Objectives | John Field and Marlene A. Bellman |

4. Assign Rapporteurs and Approve Agenda John Field

B. Perspectives on the 2023 Stock Assessment Process

(8:30 a.m.; Hamel, Schaffler)

1. Center of Independent Experts (CIE)
2. Groundfish Management Team (GMT) Melanie Parker, Whitney Roberts, Katie Pierson
3. Groundfish Advisory Sub-Panel (GAP) Gerry Richter
4. STAR Panel Chairs Jason Schaffler, John Field, John Budrick
5. Stock Assessment Teams (STAT) Chantel Wetzel, Melissa Monk, Markus Min, Joshua Zahner, Jason Cope, E.J. Dick, Ian Taylor, Brian Langseth, Kelli Johnson, John Wallace, additional STAT co-authors
6. Council Staff

Break (10:30 – 10:45 a.m.)

C. Recommendations for Improving the Stock Assessment Process

(10:45 a.m.; Marshall, Barnes)

1. Pre-Assessment Planning
 - a. Successes and challenges regarding data delivery to STATs
 - b. Discussion of format, process, and level of engagement in pre-assessment data workshops
 - c. Discuss successes and challenges regarding data and other deadlines for the 2023 assessment cycle

Lunch (12:30-1:30 p.m.)

C. Recommendations for Improving the Stock Assessment Process (continued)

(1:30 p.m.; Punt, Tsou)

2. Stock Assessment Reviews
 - a. Review panel ground rules and discuss need for a STAR-specific code of conduct
 - b. Continue discussions on review process and capacity for data moderate assessments
 - c. Projections and decision tables for draft and final assessments, revisited
 - d. Discuss level of need for consistency in how best to develop and compare assessment sigma estimates with default sigma values
 - e. Role of GMT and GAP representatives prior, during, and following review
 - f. Improvements and challenges in availability of documents and files during review

Break (3:15 – 3:30 p.m.)

C. Recommendations for Improving the Stock Assessment Process (continued)

(3:30 p.m.; Free, Moore)

3. GFSC, SSC and PFMC review of post-STAR assessments and reports
 - a. Timing considerations (ongoing issues related to tradeoffs between STAT workload, GFSC review time and briefing book deadlines)
 - b. Discussion of process for assessment updates, catch-only projections, and rebuilding plans (strategies for improving throughput, addressing analytical capacity)
 - c. Engagement considerations: how to better hear, address and/or respond to concerns prior to adoption by PFMC (improve communication of results, evening assessment sessions, other)

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

4:45 p.m. (or immediately following Agenda Item C.3)

Public comments, including comments on issues not on the agenda, are accepted at this time.

Thursday, January 18, 2024 – 8:00 AM

Brief recap of Day 1 (Field)

D. Recommendations and revisions for the 2025-2026 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference (TOR): TOR Sections 3-5: Roles and responsibilities

(8:15 a.m.; Barnes, Hamel)

1. Responsibilities for developing code of conduct
2. Responsibilities for enforcing code of conduct (need/plan for a scripted response?)
3. Consideration of revised timelines and/or processes (e.g., formal approval) for data streams, including catch histories
4. Minor edits, bookkeeping (e.g., where is “section 5”?)
5. Revision of language regarding stock structure (consistency with Amendment 31), recognition that model structure can be at finer scale with STAT rationale
6. Discuss whether to request draft executive summary in draft assessments

Break (10:15-10:30 a.m.)

D. Recommendations and revisions for the 2025-2026 Stock Assessment Terms of Reference: TOR Sections 6-11: Assessment Types

(10:30 a.m.; Tsou, Field)

7. Revisit discussion of merits of including harvest projections and/or decision tables in draft assessments
8. Discuss guidance for alternative approaches for recommending or determining both states of nature and harvest projections in decision tables (e.g., structural versus model uncertainty)
9. Discuss revisions or improvements in TOR related to category designations
10. Resolve inconsistencies within current TOR (e.g., align TOR appendix B and D, who provides assessment overview to GFSC)
11. Additional revisions or improvements to TOR (including improvements, streamlining for update, catch-only projections, rebuilding analyses)

Lunch (12:30- 1:30 p.m.)

E. Accepted Practices Guidelines for Groundfish Stock Assessments in 2025-2026

(1:30 p.m.; Schaffler, Free)

1. Workshops recommended or anticipated prior to 2025 assessment cycle
2. Clarification on best practices for the use of visual survey data for either/both relative or absolute abundance
3. Suggestions for additional or improved diagnostics in r4ss
4. Potential improvements related to approaches for addressing spatial considerations
5. Guidance on implementing retrospective analyses

Break (3:15-3:30 p.m.)

F. Other Business

(3:30 p.m.; Field, Marshall)

1. Issues needing further discussion
2. Plan and timeline for completion of GFSC report

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

4:45 p.m. (or immediately following Agenda Item F)

Public comments, including comments on issues not on the agenda, are accepted at this time.

ADJOURN

PFMC

01/09/24