

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
STOCK ASSESSMENT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND ACCEPTED PRACTICES - FINAL  
ACTION

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed the revised Terms of Reference (TOR) for the coastal pelagic species (CPS) stock assessment review process and the Accepted Practices Guidelines. Kerry Griffin (Pacific Fishery Management Council Staff) was available to provide details on these topics. The SSC CPS Subcommittee met on April 17, 2024, to review the Terms of Reference (TOR) and Accepted Practices Guidelines for CPS Stock Assessments and propose changes. André Punt provided an overview of the SSC CPS Subcommittee report to guide SSC discussion.

The SSC CPS Subcommittee report notes changes made relative to the TOR. The version of the TOR posted to the June advance briefing book (Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 2) is endorsed by the SSC, with minor revisions. The SSC recommends the following substantive changes to the TOR for 2025 captured in the CPS Subcommittee report: 1) highlighting the role of the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel Chair to ensure adherence to the code of conduct for participants in STAR Panels and other reviews, 2) including bridging analyses in stock assessment reports, 3) allowing the removal of datasets from update assessments with sufficient justification, and 4) clarifying the timelines for submission of validated data. The SSC also concurs with the proposed changes provided by the CPS Management Team (CPSMT) and endorses their addition to the revised TOR (Agenda Item I.1.a, Supplemental CPSMT Report 1), except that the change to Section 5.4 should be modified to “No changes to catch values will be allowed after submission to the STAT, except with the formal approval of the STAT and the STAR Panel chair”. The SSC notes that currently the TOR is reviewed every other year, but that a more flexible review schedule may be appropriate given the small number of CPS assessments.

In the TOR Section 5.4, the SSC recommends the following language to replace the language in the second paragraph on page 14 of Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 2: “The STAT should work with state data stewards to verify catch information. The STAT should work with state data stewards on a data delivery plan that provides sufficient time (eight weeks preferred) for model development and internal review prior to the STAR Panel. STATs, state agency representatives, the CPSMT, and other data stewards should coordinate early in the process to ensure timely availability of data. The STAT should work closely with the data stewards during model development and review to prevent errors, misunderstandings, etc..”

The SSC also notes that use of the term ‘fishing mortality’ rate with regard to  $F_{MSY}$  as it is used in the Overfishing Level and Harvest Guideline harvest control rules is formally incorrect and recommends changing it to ‘exploitation’ rate in the TOR. This would also require a change to the CPS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to allow consistency, although this would be best done as a housekeeping update during the next FMP update.