

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
METHODOLOGY REVIEW – PRELIMINARY TOPIC SELECTION

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed the proposal to review the determination of fish ages using Fourier-transform Near-infrared Spectroscopy (FT-NIRS) analysis of otoliths and vertebrae provided by the Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Science Centers (NWFSC and AFSC, respectively; [Agenda Item I.5, Attachment 1](#)). Dr. Jim Hastie (NWFSC) briefed the SSC on the motivation for this proposal and an overview of the method. Traditional age reading requires a great deal of time and resources. This method shows promise of greater efficiency, reducing the time it takes to age structures, and allowing more samples to be included in future stock assessments to inform population estimates (e.g., growth).

Evaluation and application of this method are ongoing, and the SSC encourages further exploration before scheduling a formal review. The NWFSC will continue to collaborate with the AFSC to evaluate the FT-NIRS performance with a range of West Coast groundfish species, including longnose skate. The SSC recommends the results be available to consider at the data workshop scheduled for March 2019, prior to the Stock Assessment Review Panel for skates being held in June 2019. The SSC anticipates this method will be a candidate for an off-year science project in the next assessment cycle.

The Groundfish Management Team may also propose new impact projection models or other models to inform future management decisions. The SSC will consider these proposals at the November meeting for final adoption of methodology reviews if presented.

PFMC  
09/08/18