

STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING

In the Council stock assessment process, there is a year in which assessments are done to inform decisions for the following biennial management cycle, followed by a year for deciding the new groundfish harvest specifications and management measures. This agenda item concerns planning for new groundfish stock assessments that are anticipated to be done in 2013, which will be used during 2014 to decide the harvest specifications and management measures for 2015 and 2016 groundfish fisheries.

In March, the Council selected a preliminary list of groundfish stocks for full (also known as benchmark) assessment, update assessment, and those where a data report would be developed. Full assessments, where Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panels are convened to comprehensively review assessments, are proposed for darkblotched rockfish, bocaccio rockfish, petrale sole, shortspine thornyhead, longspine thornyhead, cowcod, aurora rockfish, and Pacific sanddabs. Update assessments, where the input data for past full assessments are updated, are proposed for Pacific ocean perch and sablefish. Data reports are not assessments, but an evaluation of recent catches to ensure that management is effectively maintaining harvest at or below the limits prescribed in rebuilding plans. Data reports are proposed for canary and yelloweye rockfish. In the case of bocaccio, the Council consideration was to conduct either a full or update assessment depending on analysis this spring of the strength of the 2010 year class, which was estimated to be a large recruitment but estimated with high uncertainty in the 2011 assessment. Attachment 1 provides the updated analysis of bocaccio recruitment.

There are three Terms of Reference that guide the stock assessment process: one which specifies how the next assessment process should occur and defines the roles and responsibilities of various entities contributing to this process, one which guides the development of rebuilding analyses that are used to develop harvest specifications and rebuilding plans for overfished species, and one that guides how new methods are reviewed and recommended for scientific activities that inform analyses used in management decision-making. These Terms of Reference have been reviewed by some members of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and others and are included as Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachments 2, 3, and 4, respectively. The Council may want to modify these Terms of Reference for the next assessment cycle. Refinement of these Terms of Reference for public review is scheduled for this meeting with final adoption scheduled for the September meeting.

The Council is to consider the input from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Science Centers, the advisory bodies, and the public before providing a preliminary decision on 2013-2014 stock assessment priorities by species, type of assessment (full or update), the language for the three draft Terms of Reference, and a proposed schedule for 2013 STAR Panel meetings. The Council is scheduled to make final decisions on stock assessment planning at their September meeting.

Council Action:

1. **Adopt for Public Review the List of Stocks To Be Assessed in 2013.**
2. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary Terms of Reference for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2013-2014.**
3. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary SSC Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis.**
4. **Adopt for Public Review the Preliminary Terms of Reference for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species.**
5. **Adopt for Public Review the 2013 Groundfish Stock Assessment Review Panel Meeting Schedule.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 1: A “refreshed” estimation of the relative strength of the 2010 year class for bocaccio, *Sebastes paucispinis*.
2. Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 2: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species Stock Assessment and Review Process for 2013-2014.
3. Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 3: Draft Terms of Reference for the Groundfish Rebuilding Analysis for 2013-2014.
4. Agenda Item D.3.a, Attachment 4: Draft Terms of Reference for the Methodology Review Process for Groundfish and Coastal Pelagic Species.
5. Agenda Item D.3.b, NMFS Report: Considerations for Selecting Species for Assessment in 2013.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Refine the List and Schedule of Stocks for Assessment in 2013 and the Terms of Reference.

John DeVore

PFMC
06/04/12