

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON SCOPING FOR
AMENDMENT 24: IMPROVEMENTS TO THE GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the scoping document for Amendment 24 (Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 1). Dr. Kit Dahl and Mr. John DeVore presented background information and example alternatives. The SSC has the following comments:

Some potential changes to the management process may allow for stock assessments to be done every year. The SSC has noticed that there have been clear benefits from the switch to the current two year assessment cycle. There has been standardization of methods across a larger number of assessments. In addition, the availability of a dedicated period of time (the “off year”) has allowed time for research and improvements in data inputs and assessment methods.

Changes in the rebuilding target year, associated harvest rate and annual catch limits (ACLs) for a rebuilding species can have significant management implications. For most overfished species, rebuilding rates are very slow, and actual changes in stock status and productivity are not likely to occur quickly. Some change can be expected in rebuilding analyses due simply to the probabilistic nature of these analyses. The management process should be designed to take into account the time needed for actual changes in stock status or productivity to be detected by stock assessments and rebuilding analyses.

Finally, in considering alternatives to groundfish management process, it might prove useful to explore approaches taken by other Fishery Management Councils, in addition to those of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

PFMC
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