

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT SPECIFICATIONS IN THE 2015-2016 FISHERIES

Preliminary List of Assessment Species

Dr. Jim Hastie briefed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on the criteria used to select species for assessment during the 2015-16 management cycle. The SSC notes that the Council has previously adopted a set of criteria for selecting such species (Agenda Item F.5.a Attachment 1, Page 6). A more rigorous procedure for selecting species for assessment would be to develop quantitative metrics for each criterion, and use a procedure for weighing each criterion. While the SSC recommended in November 2011 that the next assessment of bocaccio should be a full assessment, final decisions will be made after the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) add the new survey data into the current assessment and provide a summary of the impact of this to the Council.

The SSC has endorsed a methodology panel to review methods for assessing data-limited stocks. This panel will take place in late June 2012, so its report will be available at the September 2012 Council meeting. The SSC notes that yelloweye and canary rockfish are proposed for data reports. Historical catch data for Washington will be reviewed and perhaps revised. However, the SSC was advised that the data for 1930-69 will not be digitized before March 2013, so a revised Washington catch history will not be available in time for the updates to be performed in 2013. The SSC therefore supports yelloweye and canary rockfish for data reports. These are stable assessments, and their times to rebuild are very long so there is little justification for doing updates every cycle.

Under current practice, the overfishing limits (OFLs) for 2015-16 for stocks for which assessments have recently been adopted, but will not be updated nor full assessments in the 2015-16 cycle, will be based on projections in which catches between the last year and 2014 are assumed to equal the OFL. The SSC supports updating catch projections for stocks where the catches since the last assessment are set to the actual catches. However, conducting such projections for pre-2005 assessments may not be possible because the input files may no longer be available. OFLs resulting from projections will be reviewed when the SSC reviews all OFLs.

Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for Assessments and Methodology Review

The SSC considered drafts of three Terms of Reference. Members of the SSC have worked on updating two of these documents since the November 2011 Council meeting.

TOR for stock assessment

The TOR for stock assessments (Agenda Item F.5.a. Attachment 1) have been updated based on experiences gained during the most recent round of assessments and during the post-mortem workshop. The revised TOR can be used with both groundfish and CPS. They provide additional guidelines related to update assessments, including how update assessments are reviewed and what to do if an update assessment does not satisfy the requirements for an update. In addition to editorial revisions, the revised TOR provide a general framework for the incorporation of ecosystem considerations in stock assessments. The SSC does not recommend precise requirements for this section of a stock assessment

document at present. The expectations regarding ecosystem considerations are evolving, and more detailed requirements will be reflected in a future version of the TOR.

In relation to the draft TOR, the SSC notes that terms “status report” and “data report” pertain to the same concept and recommends that all references to “status report” be replaced by “data report.” It also recommends that the TOR be updated to include a separate section on data reports, which would clearly differentiate data reports from update assessments, and specify what is expected for a data report. Data reports should provide updated catch projections based on replacing predicted OFLs by the actual catches where possible.

The SSC also recommends that language be added to the TOR providing additional guidelines regarding when new methods or data should be reviewed by a methodology panel, and when this review can be part of a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel review. In particular, inclusion of new data sources which could be used in many assessments or are likely contentious should ideally be reviewed by a methodology panel. Stock assessment teams should identify whether such new data sources will be proposed for inclusion in assessments as early as feasible so that it is possible to hold a methodology panel if one is needed. Irrespective of whether a methodology panel takes place, the STAR Panel should be provided with model runs with and without the new data sources so that the Panel can evaluate the sensitivity of model outputs to these data sources.

The TOR should be updated to encourage stock assessment authors to revise projections for historical assessments in which predicted catches are replaced by actual catches whenever possible. In addition, the SSC recommends that OFL calculations should be based on the assumption that future catches equal acceptable biological catch and not OFLs, as is past practice.

The SSC recommends that the time committed to review update assessments for groundfish should be not be pre-specified, but rather whether the meeting is one or two days should be determined by the SSC once the draft update assessments become available.

The TOR will be revised based on comments received and can then be made available for public review.

TOR for rebuilding analyses

The TOR for rebuilding analyses (Agenda Item F.5.a. Attachment 2) have not been updated since 2010. The SSC will update these TOR to remove descriptions of approaches for conducting rebuilding analyses that are no longer considered standard, to revise text on standard catch streams, and to include a revised list of requirements for rebuilding analysis reports. A revised TOR will be available for the April 2012 Council meeting, when the SSC and Groundfish Management Team (GMT) are scheduled to discuss aspects of rebuilding analyses. The SSC has not yet evaluated the list of questions provided by the GMT regarding rebuilding analyses in terms of which questions are scientific rather than policy decisions. This evaluation will take place during the joint meeting with the GMT in April.

TOR for methodology reviews

The TOR for methodology reviews (Agenda Item F.5.a. Attachment 3) were originally written for coastal pelagic species (CPS) and have been updated to cover both groundfish and CPS, and could be used for highly migratory species or ecosystem issues. Major changes to

the earlier document include the composition of methodology panels, as well as the role of the technical team and the representatives of the advisory panel and management team. The SSC recommends that the items to be addressed and the meeting agenda be developed by the chair in conjunction with the proposers of the methodology. The TOR for methodology reviews will be revised based on comments received, and can then be made available for public review.

PFMC
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