



New England Fishery Management Council

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John Pappalardo, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

To: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director
From: Dr. Steve Cadrin, Scientific and Statistical Committee Chairman
Date: November 18, 2008

Subject: SSC Recommendations on Operating Procedures

The SSC reviewed the SSC policy document developed by the Council in June 2008 (attached below) and considered discussions from the national SSC workshop (November 12-14 2008, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council). The SSC acknowledges and appreciates the recent support provided by the Council in terms of travel for meetings and associated work by Council staff. We offer the following recommendations for New England SSC Operating Procedures for amendment of the existing policy:

Membership

- SSC members do not represent their agency; they are independent scientists.
- The SSC should recommend nominees of new members to the Council Executive committee based on desired skill sets.

Interaction with Peer Review

- The SSC should have input to the development of Terms of Reference for peer reviews to support the needs of the SSC (e.g., provide projected catch associated with overfishing and provide quantification of scientific uncertainty for determining Acceptable Biological Catch).
- The Council should request SSC members to serve on peer reviews (rather than assign SSC members).
- The SSC requests that SSC members be compensated for participation in peer reviews.

Council Requests for SSC Recommendations

- The SSC should be primarily responsive to Council requests, and should set its own annual and monthly agenda based on these requests and other issues as time allows.
- All Council requests for SSC recommendations should be from the Council Executive Committee
- Council requests should be clearly communicated in a memorandum from the Executive Director, including the specific issues that need SSC review and recommendations.
- All available background information and analyses should be provided by the appropriate organization (e.g., PDT, technical committee) through technical documents and a visual presentation by a representative of the organization that includes the major issues, background information, analyses and conclusions.
- To the extent possible, documents should include the best scientific information available and meet the criteria specified by NRC (2004): relevance, inclusiveness, objectivity, transparency and openness, timeliness, and peer reviewed.
- Background documentation should include a concise summary of previous scientific and management episodes related to each issue.

Priorities

- The SSC will prioritize Acceptable Biological Catch recommendations.
- The SSC will avoid duplication of official peer reviews.

- In addition to Council requests, the SSC will consider larger aspects of the spirit of the act (e.g., ecosystem-based fishery management, socio-economic benefits).

Meeting Agendas

- The SSC should meet in conjunction with Council meetings, and request other meetings as needed.
- The SSC should consider each request at least one month before the Council deliberates on the issue:
 - Month 1 – new business
 - Documents are available for SSC review before the meeting.
 - Critical issues are identified.
 - SSC recommendations are discussed and drafted, if possible.
 - Tasks are delegated for intervening month.
 - Intervening work
 - Critical issues are reviewed further, if necessary.
 - Draft recommendations are developed (by correspondence or within subgroups).
 - Month 2 – old business
 - Intervening review and draft recommendations are discussed.
 - SSC consensus is developed.
 - SSC recommendations are reported to the Council.

SSC Recommendations

- A majority quorum should be sought for SSC recommendations.
- SSC recommendations should be consensus statements.
 - Consensus statements can identify greatest common perception with caveats.
 - Majority and minority reports could be included in a consensus statement as a last resort.
 - Only matters of process will be voted on (chair, vice-chair, agenda, etc.).
- Public comment is invited at the discretion of the SSC chair.
- SSC reports will consist of concise recommendations, identification of supporting documents, and technical appendices that document SSC analyses.

Annual Agendas

- Prior to the requirement date for Annual Catch Limits (2010 if overfishing, 2011 all others), the SSC will review the scientific basis of all Fishery Management Plans with a focus on methods to derive catch associated with overfishing (OFL), Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs).
- The annual schedule of FMPs, Amendments and Framework adjustments for Council deliberation will be provided by Council staff.
- A SSC member will be assigned to lead review of each Council agenda item at least one month in advance. The SSC lead will work with the SSC chair to identify issues for SSC discussion.
- In addition to meeting in conjunction with Council meetings, the SSC will schedule additional meetings, as needed:
 - í for additional FMP item reviews.
 - í to address longer term issues at workshops to develop recommendations in the form of white papers.

The proposed 2009 SSC agenda is below.

Proposed 2009 SSC Agenda (November 2008)

Date	<i>FMP</i>	Topic	SSC Lead
8-Feb	Scallops	Process for ABC, ACL, AM recommendations	P. Sullivan D.
Portsmouth		Methods for social & economic impact	Georgianna
Mar	Habitat	Analyses of gear effects, vulnerability, assessment and adverse impacts	J. Kritzer
14-Apr	Groundfish	Amt 16 DSEIS measures	V. Crecco
Mystic		SSC Report on Scallops & Habitat	S. Cadrin
May	Herring	Process for ABC, ACL, AM recommendations	L. Kaufman
	Groundfish	ABC recommendations for Amt 16	TBD
22-Jun	Herring	SSC recommendation on ABC	S. Cadrin
Portland	Groundfish	SSC recommendation on ABC	S. Cadrin
Jul	Ecosystem-Based Management		R. O'Boyle
		SSC Workshop & 'white paper'	
Aug	Scallops	FW21 - 2010 recommendations	J. Hoenig
		Amt 15 DEIS measures	
21-Sep	Herring	Amt 4 DEIS	J. Gates
Plymouth	Scallops	SSC recommendations on 2010	J. Hoenig
Oct			
18-Nov	Monkfish	Amt 5 ABC recommendations	J. Annala
Newport RI			

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The purpose of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) is to assist the Council in the development, collection and evaluation of statistical, biological and other scientific information relevant to the development and amendment of any fishery management plan (Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act §302).

The SSC will:

- Assist the Council in the development, collection, evaluation, and peer review of statistical, biological, economic, social, and other scientific information relevant to the development and amendment of fishery management plans;
- Provide the Council ongoing scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch, preventing overfishing, maximum sustainable yield, and achieving rebuilding targets, and reports on stock status and health, bycatch, habitat status, social and economic impacts of management measures, and sustainability of fishing practices;
- Provide guidance to ensure that FMPs, amendments and framework adjustments are based on the best scientific information available (National Standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act);
- Review stock assessment updates as requested through the Stock Assessment Workshop. One or more SSC members will be assigned by the Council to serve on or Chair SAW/SARC committees;
- Upon request, advise the Council on the preparation of comments for any FMP or amendments prepared by the Secretary or other bodies which are transmitted to the Council pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act; and
- Perform other appropriate tasks as may be required by the Council.

Organization The Executive Director will announce SSC vacancies through the news media, the mail and in other ways he determines appropriate. Interested persons will be required to submit their resumes and other information requested by the Executive Director.

NEFSC Policy Document (June 2008)

The Executive Director also will prepare a list of nominees. The five voting members of the Executive Committee will appoint SSC members on the basis of their expertise in fisheries science, ecology and social sciences.

Prior to their appointment, a list of SSC nominees and qualifications will be made available to the full Council. Members of the Council will, in turn, have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Executive Committee prior to the selection of SSC members.

SSC Operations The SSC will have no less than 15 members. Nine of the members will have expertise in fisheries stock assessments, three in fisheries ecology and three in social sciences related to fisheries management. The SSC may call upon additional expertise with the approval of the Executive Director. SSC members will serve for renewable three-year terms.

The SSC will nominate from its members a Chair and Vice Chair who both will be confirmed by the Executive Committee for one-year, renewable terms. Members may be compensated when funding is available and will be paid for travel expenses in accordance with Council travel policy. The Executive Committee may appoint additional SSC members on ad hoc basis if needed to provide the Council additional expertise on a particular issue or question. The Executive Director will provide staff and other support as necessary.

Meetings To the extent practicable, the SSC will meet regularly either before or in conjunction with Council meetings and the SSC chair (or appropriate representative) will attend Council meetings. The Committee also will meet as a whole, or in part, at the request of Executive Director with the approval of the Council Chair whenever necessary to fulfill its responsibilities.

FMP Development Process

