

SSC Report to NEFMC: Scallops, Groundfish & Skates

Danvers, MA

December 16, 2013

Jake Kritzer, SSC Chair

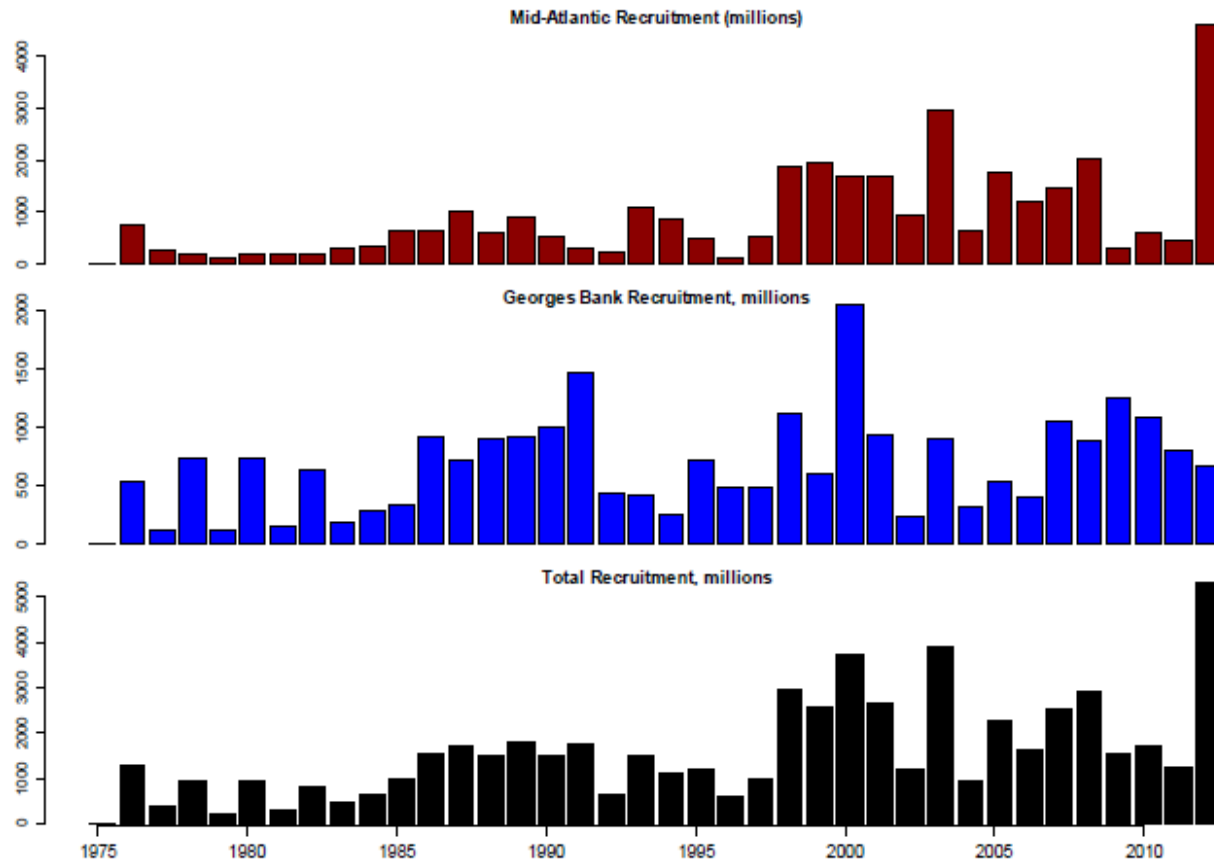


Scallop TORs



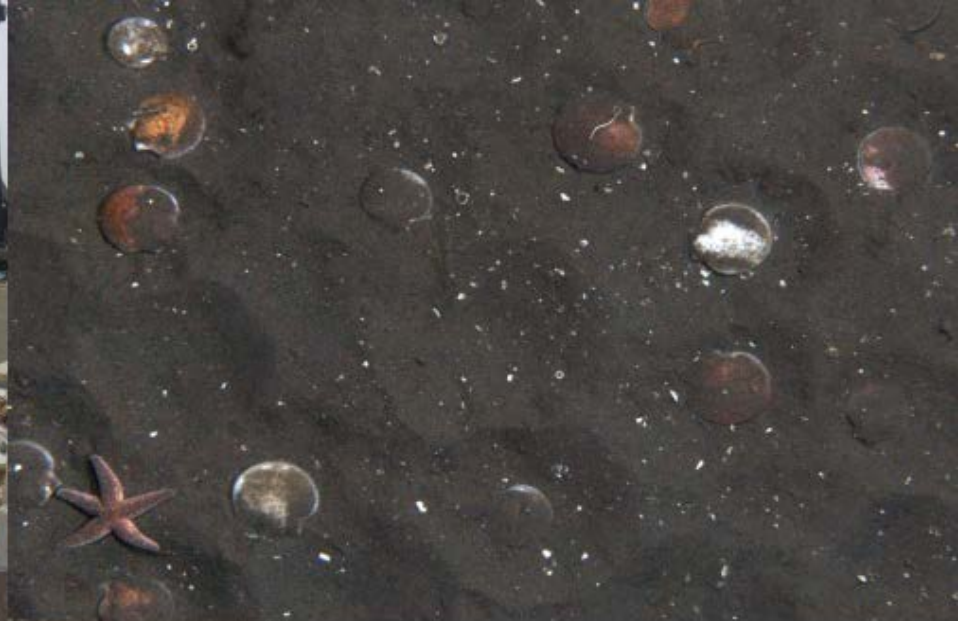
- Recommend an OFL and ABC for Atlantic sea scallops consistent with the fishing mortality limit (FMSY or its proxy) and the ABC control rule or rebuilding program for fishing years 2014 and 2015 (default).
- In considering the recommendations developed at the September 16, 2013 SSC meeting, the Council requests that the SSC review the calculation of discards and incidental mortality that the PDT will provide in more detail. The Council is not requesting that the SSC modify the assumptions or methods approved in the last benchmark assessment for estimating discard and incidental mortality.
- Comments on the draft TORs for the upcoming sea scallop benchmark assessment to be conducted as part of SAW/SARC59.

Recruitment estimates



- Overestimated recruitment? Catch limits too high?
- Consider retaining 2014 ABC for 2015 as well?

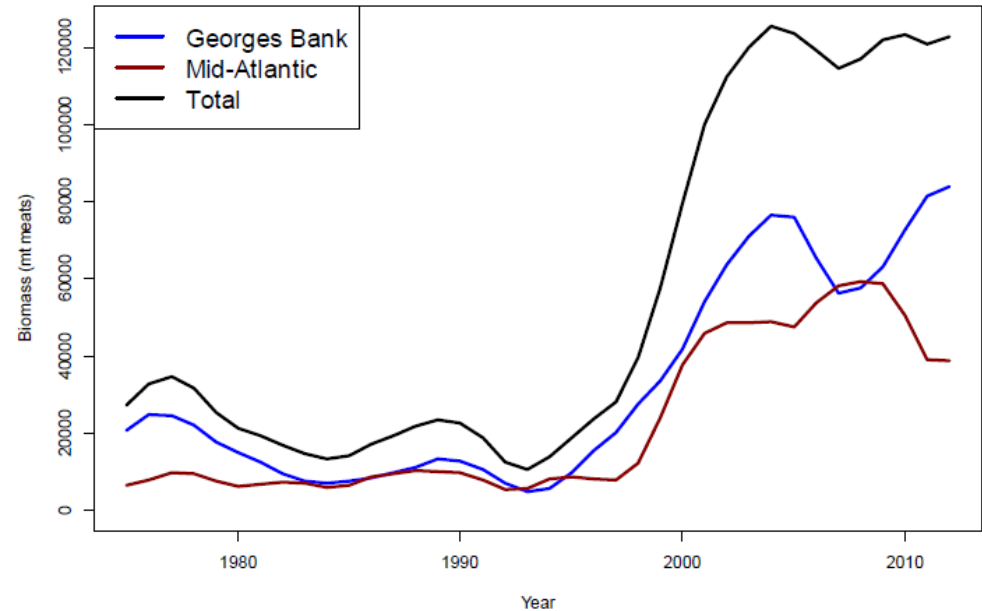
Recruitment evidence



Recruitment in Mid-Atlantic is not as widespread as 2003, but nonetheless patches of very high densities of both 2 and 3 year olds were observed both with the dredge and Habcam

Catch Advice

- OFL:
 - 2014 = 30,419mt
 - 2015 = 34,247mt
- ABC:
 - 2014 = 26,240mt
 - 2015 = 29,683mt



- Consistent and transparent rules needed for when to use projected stock growth and when to use other approaches such as constant catch.

Incidental Mortality

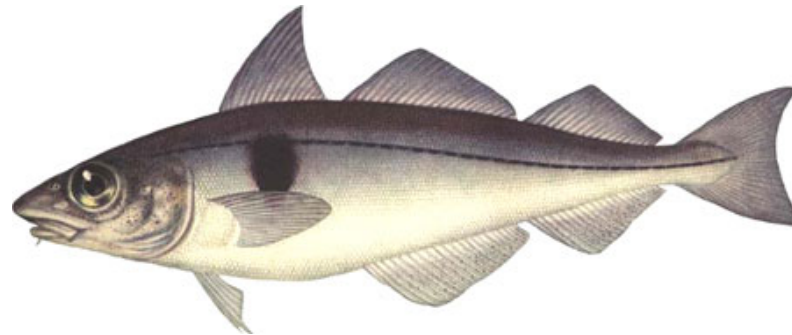
- PDT review of studies dates 1973-2001.
- Did not attempt to reach consensus on a best estimate.
- Considerations:
 - Estimates should account for changes in fishing gear and behavior.
 - Size-specific differences are likely and possibly should be incorporated into assessments and catch advice.
 - Rates likely to differ among substrates; differences possibly should be factored into assessments and catch advice.
- Research needed to produce these estimates.
- Sensitivity analyses needed first to determine importance.

Comments on SAW/SARC 59 TORs

- Sensitivity analyses of incidental mortality rates can be addressed via TOR7.
- TOR3 re: environmental drivers of recruitment is worthwhile and will help move toward ecosystem-based approaches.
- TOR6 re: consideration of a new model needs clarification.
- Pooled and regional assessment outputs should be developed so that mortality and the health of the populations can be examined on multiple scales.
- The process by which days at sea are calculated in the context of stock projections should be examined.
- Did not prioritize recommendations.
- Defer to judgment of assessment team re: prioritization and time allocation.

Groundfish TOR

- Recommend an OFL and ABCs for the Gulf of Maine haddock stock consistent with the fishing mortality limit (FMSY or its proxy) and the ABC control rule or rebuilding program for fishing years 2013-2015.



- Comment on likely willingness to recommend 2015 ABCs for pollock, Gulf of Maine winter flounder and Georges Bank winter flounder in 2014 without new stock assessments.

Discussion Points

- Industry reports haddock widespread in GOM.
- PDT concluded that:
 - Early evidence suggests 2012 year class might be strong.
 - Outcomes of 2012 update remain best estimate of 2010 year class.
 - OFLs and ABCs should not be changed.
- 2013 survey results will lend insights into strength of 2010 and 2012 year classes.
- Survey results best utilized in an assessment update.
- Time taken for PDT to complete its analyses was comparable to that required for an update.
- Other information (e.g., spatial analyses, economic data) could be useful, but formal mechanisms for inclusion are lacking.

Catch Advice

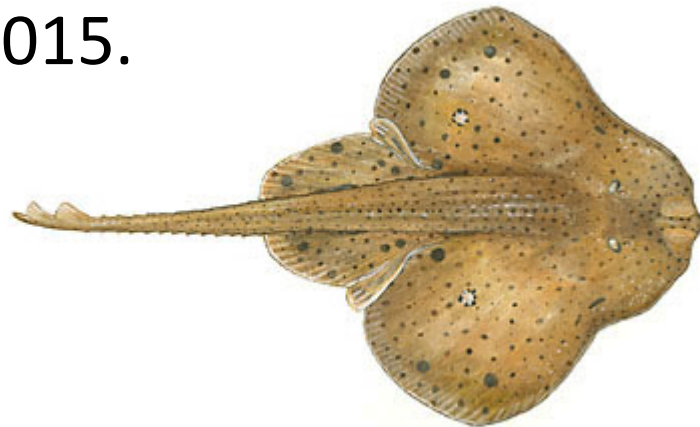
- OFL:
 - 2014 = 440mt
 - 2015 = 561mt
- ABC:
 - 2014 = 341mt
 - 2015 = 435mt

2015 ABCs for Pollock, GOM WF & GB WF

- Unlikely to recommend new ABCs for pollock, GOM winter flounder and GB winter flounder in the absence of updated information (e.g., survey results) or assessment updates.
- Note PDT comment that time required to provide broad analysis was comparable to what would have been needed to complete an update, and therefore recommend new assessment updates be considered.
- In the absence of assessment updates or other information and analyses, likely that 2014 ABCs would simply be carried over to 2015.

Skate TORs

- Approve update of discard mortality estimates to be used in ABC specifications for fishing years 2014-2015.
- Review revised estimate of MSY resulting from revised discard mortality updates.
- Recommend an ABC for the Northeast Skate Complex consistent with the fishing mortality limit (FMSY or its proxy) and the ABC control rule or rebuilding program for fishing years 2014-2015.



Discard Mortality

- Summary of Mandelman et al. (2013):
 - ▶ Tow times
 - ▶ Control: 15-20 min
 - ▶ Moderate: 90 – 120 min
 - ▶ Extended: 180 – 240 min
 - ▶ At vessel mortality <1%
 - ▶ Overall mortality = 19%
 - ▶ Winter = 9%
 - ▶ Little = 22%
 - ▶ Thorny = 23%
 - ▶ Smooth = 60%
- Methodologically sound.
- Adopt updated estimates for trawl gear.
- Retain 50% estimate for gillnet.

MSY, ABC & Other Recommendations

- Revised MSY using new discard mortality estimates = 36,415mt
- ABC = 35,479mt for 2014 and 2015.
- The ABC control rule should be revisited. The control rule was established when the complex was overfished, and it might not be as suitable for rebuilt stocks. A revised control rule might include different methodologies that apply at different stock statuses.
- Development of ABCs for individual species and/or geographically defined management units should be considered. Although there are important practical limitations associated with species- and/or area-specific ABCs, there are also important costs of an ABC applied across too large of an area and across species with different biology, distribution and status.
- Development of improved MSY reference points (or proxies) should be considered.

Other Business

- Interest in briefing on & discussion of NRC report.
- National SSC Workshop likely taking place Nov. 2014 in Portland, OR; focus might include some or all of:
 - Data-poor & model-resistant stocks.
 - Incorporating climate & other ecosystem effects.
 - EBFM.
 - Habitat and spatial management.
- Congrats to Alexei Sharov for ASMFC Award of Excellence.
- Farewell, thanks and best of luck to John Annala.

Questions?

