

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 shall:

- 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 fishery management plans, 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 or Council. One or more SSC members also shall be requested by the Council to serve on or Chair Stock Assessment Workshops/Stock Assessment Review Committees and other appropriate peer review committees;
- Provide input into the development of Terms of Reference for peer reviews to support the needs of the SSC (e.g. for purposes of obtaining projected catch associated with overfishing and quantification of scientific uncertainty for determining Acceptable Biological Catch);
- 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 shall announce SSC vacancies through the available communication and media outlets, the mail and in other ways he determines appropriate. Additionally, the SSC shall be given the opportunity to recommend SSC nominees to the Council Executive Committee, based on desired skill sets. Interested persons will be required to submit their resumes and other information requested by the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall prepare a list of nominees.

Prior to their appointment, a list of SSC nominees and qualifications shall be made available to the full Council. Members of the Council shall, in turn, have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Executive Committee prior to the selection of SSC members. Subsequently, the five voting members of the Executive Committee shall appoint SSC members on the basis of their expertise in fisheries science, ecology and social sciences.

SSC Membership and Operations The SSC should have no less than 15 members. Nine of the members should have expertise in fisheries stock assessments, three in fisheries ecology and three in social sciences related to fisheries management. SSC members shall serve for renewable three-year terms. Committee members shall not represent their agencies or institutions, but will function as independent scientists on the SSC.

The SSC shall 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 the Council's travel policy. SSC members also may be compensated for participation in peer reviews, based on available funding.

The Executive Committee may appoint additional SSC members on an ad hoc basis, or the SSC may call upon additional expertise if needed, with the approval of the Executive Director.

SSC Priorities The SSC is tasked with the development of Acceptable Biological Catch recommendations. In doing so, it shall avoid duplication of official peer reviews and consider the larger aspects of the 'spirit of the act' (e.g., ecosystem-based fishery management, socio-economic benefits and other relevant issues identified in the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act).

Meetings To the extent practicable, the SSC shall meet regularly, either before or in conjunction with Council meetings, and the SSC chair (or appropriate representative) should attend Council meetings. The Committee also should meet as a whole, or in part, at its own request or at the request of Executive Director, with the approval of the Council Chair whenever necessary to fulfill its responsibilities. The SSC may schedule additional meetings, as needed, for the review of fishery management plan items and to address longer-term issues at workshops that may require SSC recommendations in the form of "white papers." The Executive Director shall provide staff and other support to the committee.

Council Requests for SSC Recommendations The SSC shall be primarily responsive to Council requests, and shall set its own annual and monthly agendas based on these requests and other issues as time allows. All Council requests for SSC recommendations should be forwarded from the Council through its Executive Committee or Chairman.

Council requests should be clearly communicated in a memorandum from the Executive Director, including the specific issues that require SSC review and the development of recommendations to the Council.