



New England Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 2, 2011
TO: Science and Statistical Committee
FROM: Paul Howard, Executive Director
SUBJECT: **SSC Meeting, August 10, 2011: Groundfish Discussion**

Background

This fall the SSC will recommend Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for most groundfish stocks. Since most groundfish stocks will not be assessed this year, the Augmented Groundfish Plan Development Team (APDT) is developing analytic techniques for developing ABC recommendations. The focus of these efforts was to attempt to identify metrics that could be used to verify that the stock size projected forward from the most recent assessment is reliable and can be used to develop catch advice. If this was not the case, then the APDT was to identify how to make adjustments to the catch advice from the projections. If this attempt was also unsuccessful the APDT was to suggest alternatives for setting ABCs. The SSC will receive an update on the PDT's progress at this meeting.

Terms of reference

The SSC is asked to provide advice on the following issues:

- a. What methods should be used to calculate recommended ABCs for FY 2012 – 2014 for groundfish stocks that were last assessed using analytic assessments in GARM III?
 - (1) One alternative recommended by the Augmented Groundfish Plan Development Team for setting FY 2012 -2014 ABCs is to use the FY 2012 ABC that has already been established as the ABC for FY 2012 – 2014. Does the SSC recommend this method?
 - (2) One alternative recommended by the Augmented Groundfish Plan Development Team for setting FY 2012 -2014 ABCs is to use a decision rule based on the trend in the aggregated NEFSC survey biomass index (weight/tow) to choose between the FY 2010 ABC and FY 2012 ABC for use as the FY 2012 – 2014 ABC. Does the SSC recommend this method?
 - (3) If the SSC does not recommend either (1) or (2), what approach does the SSC recommend for setting FY 2012 -2014 ABCs for groundfish stocks?

- b. Does the SSC agree with the APDT's recommendations for setting ABCs for stocks that have either been assessed since GARM III or use index-based assessments?

Information:

- (1) SSC report dated June 20, 2011
- (2) Groundfish APDT conference call summary dated July 13, 2011
- (3) Groundfish APDT conference call summary dated August 2, 2011
- (4) 52nd Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop Summary Report. 2011. NEFSC Reference Document 11-11