

## Skate ABC update

Fall 2008 survey data review  
Skate PDT

### Background

- February 2009: SSC approved method for setting an aggregate skate ABC based on exploitation ratios and a 3-year average survey biomass index
- April 2009: Council approved final alternative for Amendment 3
- Error discovered in the ABC calculation during the development of the final amendment document
- September 2009: SSC approves correction and update using data that had been reviewed by the DPWS, including fall 2007 and spring 2008 survey indices.
- Fall 2008 biomass indices were available but had not been peer reviewed. New survey gear and the RV Bigelow trawl survey began spring 2009.

## Background

- Council submitted a final amendment document in November 2009; proposed rule published on January 21, 2010 with a comment deadline of February 22, 2010.
- Final rule to take effect on May 1, 2010.
- ABC=ACL>ACT>TAL for 2010-2011
- Annual accountability measure to adjust for ACL and TAL overages
- SAFE Report and two year specifications package to be developed in 2011 for the 2012-2013 fishing years

## Background

- Issue identified as an SSC priority, reported at the January 2010 Council meeting and put on the March SSC meeting agenda.
- Council will consider SSC recommendations at April 2010 meeting and decide how to proceed.

## PDT review

- Data analyzed and scrutinized during late February and early March
- Results reviewed at a March 8 PDT meeting
  - Andrew Applegate, chair
  - Kathy Sosebee, NEFSC
  - Todd Gedamke, SEFSC
  - Tobey Curtis, NERO
  - Fiona Hogan, SMAST
  - Scott Olszewski, RIDEM

## PDT review

- Winter skate biomass index increased from 3.71 kg/tow in 2007 to 9.50 kg/tow in 2008
- Calculations are correct, consistent with prior years, and stratified mean biomass indices are produced by a standard, well-used program.
- No apparent anomalous events that affected the geographical distribution of winter skate catches

## PDT review

- Winter skate biomass trends seem to be consistent among strata with the 10 highest average catch
- No extra large (possibly anomalous) tows were apparent
- Winter skate size frequencies in 2008 were consistent with 2007, but a little higher than predicted from 75-90 cm
- Immigration of large winter skates occurred in early 1980s and persisted in US waters for several years.

## Results

- Inclusion of the fall 2008 survey biomass indices would increase the aggregate skate TAC by 34%
- TAL of 12,638 mt would be 29% less than 2009 landings, and 9% less than 2003-2006 average landings.

	Current	Updated
<b>ABC/ACL</b>	30,643	41,080
<b>ACT</b>	22,982	30,810
<b>TAL</b>	9,427	12,638
<b>Skate Wing TAL</b>	6,269	8,404
<b>Skate Bait TAL</b>	3,158	4,234

## Cautionary caveats

- An index based ABC using a 3 year moving average will have some natural instability/variability
- Higher ABC and skate possession limits could have negative implications for overfished smooth and thorny skates
- If updated, skate discard estimates may affect the TAL. An increase in the skate discard rate might be anticipated.

## Cautionary caveats

- ABC cannot be adjusted using current methods until survey calibrations are available
  - Calibration coefficients are unavailable for 5 of the 7 skates
  - Issues with changes in survey size selectivity for little and winter skates, even though overall calibration coefficients have been estimated
  - Review/SAFE Report in 2011 for specifications package?
  - A Really, Really Data Poor Workshop?