



New England Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 14, 2011
TO: Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)
FROM: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director
SUBJECT: **Terms of reference for the March 30-31, 2011 for the SSC review of the report *Economic and Scientific Conditions in the Massachusetts Multispecies Groundfishery***

The SSC has been asked by the New England Fishery Management Council to review the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Institute report titled “Economic and Scientific Conditions in the Massachusetts Multispecies Groundfishery”, dated November 5, 2010. The following terms of reference will help inform the Council about the use of best available science with respect to the proposals outlined in the report and in the future.

1. Did the direct or proxy estimates of F_{MSY} and B_{MSY} as status determination criteria for the groundfish stocks assessed in GARM III represent the best available science? Was the subsequent use of these status determination criteria to determine OFLs and rebuilding plans appropriate?
2. If the direct estimates of F_{MSY} and B_{MSY} represent the best available science, but proxy estimates were chosen, did that decision reflect an explicit precautionary decision that led to “double-counting” when the SSC recommended buffers for scientific uncertainty?
3. Comment on other GARM decisions discussed in the MFI Report, exclusive of the F_{MSY} proxies, that are relevant to assessing multispecies stocks, providing information for OFLs, and setting ABCs. This question should be considered in terms of the ABCs recommended for 2010 and 2011, as well as those that will be developed for 2012-2013.
4. In light of the MFI Report, are there recommendations concerning additional information needed by the SSC to gauge uncertainty and risk, and therefore to set buffers?