



New England Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 9, 2009
TO: Dr. Steve Cadrin, Chairman, Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)
FROM: John Pappalardo, Chairman, NEFMC
SUBJECT: **Herring Committee Questions for SSC Consideration**

The Herring Committee met on August 6, 2009 to review and discuss the recent results of the Transboundary Resource Assessment Committee (TRAC) update assessment for the Atlantic herring stock complex. Following a thorough discussion of the TRAC results, the Herring Committee generated the following questions regarding the assessment for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to consider at its September 16, 2009 meeting, if time allows, or to prepare Dr. Pat Sullivan if the issues are brought up at the September Council meeting.

The Herring Committee's discussion centered on the prominent retrospective pattern present in the TRAC assessment, and how to interpret the assessment from data with high margins of error and uncertainty.

1. Can the SSC reconcile its guidance to the Herring PDT about accounting for the retrospective pattern in setting the ABC with the recommendation of the Retrospective Working Group in January 2008 that a strong retrospective pattern is grounds to reject the assessment model as an indication of stock status or the basis for management advice? If the assessment is to be used to form the basis of management advice, is it robust enough for a three-year TAC setting process?
2. Is it appropriate to use the age-structured ASAP model when considering the significant disagreement between the three primary labs that age herring?
3. Since the stock is not considered to be overfished and overfishing is not occurring, what value of F would be appropriate to use in 2010?
4. Would it be appropriate to use the TRAC assessment results with a higher M to address previous recommendations, and if so what would be the implications of a higher mortality rate, and would there be an effect on those reference points?

5. Given that the herring resource is composed of smaller spawning components and the mixing ratios and migratory patterns remain somewhat uncertain, how does the Committee prevent double counting scientific uncertainty?
6. What is the impact of the uncertainty related to the 2005 year class? What was the impact of the Canadian catch of the 2005 year class on stock abundance? Would the assessment be improved by adding age 1 fish caught in both the New Brunswick weir fishery and the U.S. fishery?
7. The reasons for eliminating the winter survey from the assessment model appear unclear. Does the SSC agree with the elimination of the winter survey from the updated assessment?