

# **Draft SSC Report October 2022**



**Balance of SSC Report**

# B1 Plan Team Nominations

## GPT Nominations (1 of 1)

- The SSC reviewed the nominations of Dr. Cecilia O’Leary and Dr. Ben Williams to the GOA groundfish plan team.
- The SSC finds these nominees to be well-qualified and recommends the Council approve their nominations

# C4 Greenland Turbot Longline Pots – Initial Review

## Greenland turbot (1 of 1)

- Amendment to allow directed catch of Greenland turbot with longline pots, in response to killer whale depredation that has made the non-trawl hook longline fishery non-viable
- The SSC ***finds*** the document adequate to allow the Council to understand the fishery and policy impacts of the alternatives.
- The SSC ***recommends*** the document be advanced to public review with minor modifications.
  - Explain why the 9” tunnel restriction is not needed
  - Clarify whether the status quo policy reflects no fishing
  - Enhance qualitative description of some of the home port and community effects of the proposed action

# C5 Joint Groundfish Plan Team Report

## JGPT report (1 of 3)

- Forage species
  - The SSC ***continues to support*** the JGPT organizing a public forage species workshop and supports the proposed timing, following the BSAI Forage Fish assessment in 2023
  - The SSC ***supports*** the Ecosystem Committee's recommendation to expand participation and suggests that ADF&G might also be able to contribute to the workshop goals (herring)
- Whale Depredation
  - The SSC ***appreciates*** the updates of this analysis as requested and looks forward to models using these updated values in December
  - Decrease in depredation, likely due to increased use of pot gear

# C5 Joint Groundfish Plan Team Report

## JGPT report (2 of 3)

- Shark model update/Pacific sleeper shark stock structure
  - The SSC **supports** the recommendation to bring forward the proposed models/approaches
    - Status quo approach
    - ORCS model for sleeper sharks in GOA and BSAI
    - Alternative approach (90<sup>th</sup> percentile) to other/unidentified sharks in BSAI and GOA and spiny dogfish in the BSAI
  - The SSC **concur**s with the author/JGPT recommendation to produce a single Alaska shark document with separate GOA and BSAI specifications
  - The SSC **supported** continued conversations with the observer program to increase the information collected on sharks

# C5 Joint Groundfish Plan Team Report

## JGPT report (3 of 3)

- Random Effects for Tier 4/5 and spatial allocation analyses
  - The SSC **supports** the JGPT recommendation that assessments transition to the *rema* framework
    - Includes all previous model variants in unified framework
    - Enhanced flexibility & other improvements
  - The SSC **suggests** authors coordinate on how and when the features of this new software will be used

# C5 BSAI Plan Team

## BSAI PT report (1 of 3)

- The SSC ***supports*** the BSAI PT recommendations for
  - models and analyses for the 2022 assessment cycle
  - data exploration and model refinement
- The SSC ***commends*** NMFS staff efforts to ensure continuity of surveys and transparency in sampling and data processing which are paramount to the stock assessment process.

# C5 BSAI Plan Team

## BSAI PT report (2 of 3)

- The SSC ***supports*** the BSAI GPT recommendation that bottom trawl survey staff produce a document detailing the past changes in gear and survey configurations as well as species identification for authors to reference in future assessments
- The SSC ***recommends*** that assessment authors continue to highlight instances where the lack of EBS slope survey data may degrade stock assessment performance
- The SSC ***notes*** that survey staffing limitations and assessment author turnover continue to present challenges and ***appreciates*** concerted efforts by NMFS staff to improve efficiency and safeguard assessment quality under these difficult conditions.



# C5 BSAI Plan Team

## BSAI PT report (3 of 3)

- The SSC **concur**s with the BSAI GPT's recommendations for no RE/BS model changes and for further examination of natural mortality values
- The SSC **recomm**ends the RE/BS assessment author explore use of the pre-2020 IPHC data in the assessment with emphasis on sampling in untrawlable habitats

# C5 GOA Plan Team

## GOA PT report (1 of 1)

- The SSC **supports** the GOA PT recommendations for models and analyses for the 2022 assessment cycle
- The SSC **supports** continued research on the incorporation of environmental and maturity covariates to inform Shelikof survey catchability in the GOA pollock assessment
- The SSC appreciates efforts by stock authors to update natural mortality estimates for GOA Other Rockfish species and looks forward to reviewing the methodology and justification for weighting estimates
- The SSC **supports** efforts to develop a state-space surplus production model for SEO Demersal Shelf Rockfish, but concurs with the GPT that while promising this should remain on a research track for the current assessment cycle

# C5 Groundfish Harvest Specifications

## Proposed Specifications (1 of 1)

- For both the BSAI and the GOA
  - The SSC **recommends** approval of the proposed 2023/2024 groundfish specifications as provided by the BSAI/GOA GPT
  - The SSC **supports** the BSAI/GOA GPT's recommendation to approve the Halibut DMR Working Group recommendation for proposed halibut DMRs for 2023/2024

# D1 Stock Prioritization

## Stock Prioritization (1 of 3)

- The SSC commends the presenters on their summary of the wide range of challenges being faced, which provided valuable context for the 2022 review and stock assessment prioritization effort
- The SSS **supports** efforts towards increased reproducibility and streamlining processes, including automating rote tasks to promote standardization and efficiency in communication
- The SSC **suggests** this could include:
  - easily accessible, standardized harvest specification tables
  - coordination with economists and social scientists for ESR and ESP products

# D1 Stock Prioritization

## Stock Prioritization (2 of 3)

- The SSC **requests** that the AFSC and JGPT develop definitions of partial, full, and benchmark assessments and specify what documentation and level of review are needed for each
  - Including suggestions on frequency of each type of assessment or decision points for conducting benchmark assessments
- The SSC **supports** the approach presented by AFSC for the re-evaluation of stock prioritization and **requests** including a narrative with key considerations for stocks that are being recommended for a change in assessment frequency.
- The SSC **requests** that the CPT conduct a parallel process to re-evaluate stock prioritization for crab assessments.

# D1 Stock Prioritization

## Stock Prioritization (3 of 3)

- The SSC **suggests** that experience gathered from other regions may be useful in evaluating the optimal timing of assessments.
- The SSC **strongly supports** AFSC moving to a more team-based approach
  - West coast centers' team-based framework may be helpful
- The SSC **notes** that it is critical that surveys be maintained even if assessment frequency for some species decreases

# D2 Bristol Bay Red King Crab Expanded Information

## BBRKC discussion paper (1 of 3)

- The expanded Bristol Bay red king crab discussion paper identifies:
  - data available on sources of BBRKC mortality
  - seasonal and spatial fishery effort in the Bristol Bay region
  - potential management options that could address mortality
- The SSC ***finds*** that the authors were very thorough in providing extensive information relative to these topics and that the quality of the data are adequate for evaluating tradeoffs associated with a range of actions
- The SSC ***recommends*** including the following in subsequent analyses
  - Available information on salmon and herring PSC
  - Information on potential decreases in CPUE - and hence increased effort - when fleets are displaced from closures

# D2 Bristol Bay Red King Crab Expanded Information

## BBRKC discussion paper (2 of 3)

- The SSC highlighted a number of recommendations from the paper as important for short-term or long-term support noting that these would augment the information already available to the Council
- Short term:
  - Assess potential for pelagic trawl bottom contact
  - Consider Fishing Effects mode to identify potential pelagic fishing effort relative to closure areas
  - Analysis of pot fishery extrapolation specific to crab regions to identify if additional observer coverage is warranted



# D2 Bristol Bay Red King Crab Expanded Information

## BBRKC discussion paper (3 of 3)

- Long term:
  - Existing logbook data be evaluated to bridge understanding of survey-based summer distributions and unknown winter distributions
  - Data from AFSC survey retows may inform relative interannual timing of molting and mating without more comprehensive multi-year survey
- The SSC **notes** that detailed scientific information is not currently available to inform future action of the Council with regard to dynamic closed areas
- The SSC **suggests** that future considerations of “dynamic” closures would need to focus on annual or greater changes as opposed to shorter time scales due to data limitations

# D3 Universal Data Collection

## Universal Data Collection (1 of 3)

- The SSC reviewed a report considering key socioeconomic data components that can feasibly be uniformly collected across North Pacific federal fishing fleets
- The SSC **suggests** summarizing, for each data component:
  - Where the data components are currently used
  - The extent to which the data component is responsive to current or potential future regulatory requirements including, for example, the MSA and the NSs; program reviews, EOs 13985 and 14008
  - If the data component were not collected through this effort, the alternative next-best source of similar data, if any
  - If and how a data component could complement other existing data to create a richer source of information

# D3 Universal Data Collection

## Universal Data Collection (2 of 3)

- The SSC also **suggests** the analysts consider whether there were any data gaps identified by the Social Science Planning Team (SSPT) that could be addressed by the proposed data collections
- The SSC expressed some specific concerns related to the feasibility and appropriateness of a single uniform data collection program:
  - Some data components are not “universal” in that it would not make sense to collect the information from all fleets
  - Questions may need to be framed differently to understand the data components within different fleets
  - There is a need to consider who has the relevant information and the universe of people from whom to collect that information
  - Who would hold the data and are there confidentiality issues that would pose a problem for incorporating it into Council analyses?

# D3 Universal Data Collection

## Universal Data Collection (3 of 3)

- More generally, the SSC emphasizes the importance of social and economic data collections that support performance monitoring for management programs, program reviews, etc
- Finally, the SSC recommends the analyst include a list of EDR data that will be dropped if there is a move to a single universal collection and discussion of what may be lost

# D4 Amendment 80 Review Workplan

## A80 workplan (1 of 1)

- The SSC reviewed the workplan for the septennial review of Amendment 80, including the required allocation review
- The SSC **supports** the plan to build upon the format of the recent Central GOA Rockfish Program Review and the BSAI Pacific Cod Sector Allocation Review as models
- The SSC **finds** the set of metrics chosen to track performance on each element of the Amendment 80 purpose and need to be informative, accessible, and appropriate
- The SSC provided minor suggestions on improving the characterization of community impacts

# D6 Climate Readiness Synthesis

## Climate Readiness (1 of 2)

- The SSC received an informational presentation from the Bering Sea FEP, Climate Change Task Force on the draft of the “Climate Readiness Synthesis” document.
- Recognizing the SSC will review the document in greater depth at a later meeting, three general points from the report were discussed.
  - 1) The innovative evaluation of the portfolio of current approaches, which will provide a natural structure to reassess and revisit management readiness over time

# D6 Climate Readiness Synthesis

## Climate Readiness (2 of 2)

- 2) The SSC **suggests** the authors may consider deeper exploration of the extent to which:
  - a) the current management system addresses community resilience with respect to climate change
  - b) the extent to which quantitative measures of community resilience or a qualitative description of community resilience to climate change are incorporated in SAFEs or other documents
- 3) The document highlights synergies with the LKTKS Task Force, and potentially the ways the Climate Readiness Synthesis can complement their efforts

# D8 Essential Fish Habitat

## D8 EFH (1 of 3)

- The SSC reviewed the methodological basis for, and outcomes from, the 2022 5-year EFH review
- The SSC ***recommends*** the current EFH methodology and FE estimates as a reasonable basis for determining fishing impacts
- The SSC ***supports*** evaluation of fishing effects for species complexes and across multiple life stages, where necessitated by data limitations
- The SSC highlights that the current SDM approach to defining EFH and FE model represent substantial methodological advances since the 2017 EFH review



# D8 Essential Fish Habitat

## D8 EFH (2 of 3)

- SSC research **recommendations** for the next 5-year review cycle
  - EFH SDM intercalibration of bottom trawl with fixed gear (NMFS LL, IPHC FISS) survey data, considering the loss of information from deeper survey stations (EBS slope, deep GOA stations)
  - Exploration of fishery-dependent information
  - Expansion of EFH definitions for other seasons and life stages where appropriate, and where data permit
  - Reporting of species-specific habitat disturbance from the FE model by major gear classes
  - Consideration of using insights from stock assessment authors and Local or Traditional Knowledge to define core habitat for species that are not well indexed by surveys

# D8 Essential Fish Habitat

## D8 EFH (3 of 3)

- The SSC **recommends** consideration for the next 5-year EFH cycle of what products and lines of future research are necessary to meet regulatory requirements and what would inform fishery management more generally
- The SSC highlights the apparent mismatch between EFH definitions for multiple life stages and the evaluation of FE for only the adult life stage
  - The SSC **recommends** an evaluation of whether FE for younger life history stages is appropriate in the future