



NOAA
FISHERIES

Alaska Fisheries
Science Center

Dialogue on “OK-ness” of ESR information and assessment information

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Background (can be skimmed or skipped)

Initial SSC request (10/17)

1. “The SSC recommends that, for those sets of environmental and fisheries observations that support the inference of an impending severe decline in stock biomass, the issue of concern be brought to the SSC, with an integrated analysis of the indices involved.”
 - “To be of greatest value, to the extent possible this information should be presented at the **October Council meeting** so that there is sufficient time for the Plan Teams and industry to react to the possible reduction in fishing opportunity.”
2. “The SSC also recommends explicit consideration and documentation of ecosystem and stock assessment status for each stock, perhaps following the framework suggested below, during the **December Council meeting** to aid in identifying areas of concern.”

Sample table accompanying request (10/17)

		Stock Assessment status	
			
Ecosystem Assessment status		2006 EBS Pollock	2016 EBS Pollock
		"No red flags were indicated."	EBS Yellowfin sole

Zador and Harvey, In prep.

Team questions regarding task #1 (11/17)

- Who will make the determination that some set(s) of environmental and fisheries observations “support the inference of an impending severe decline in stock biomass?”
- What form should the “integrated analysis” take?
- Who should conduct the integrated analysis?

Team questions regarding task #2 (11/17)

- Should the “thumbs” table be used to accomplish task #2?
 - If “yes,” then:
 - Who will make the “thumb” determinations with respect to stock assessment status and ecosystem assessment status?
 - What criteria will be used to make the “thumb” determinations?
 - Is “stock assessment status” supposed to correspond to either of the status determinations that we are required to make under the MSFCMA and, if not, how can readers be made to understand that the same term is being used to refer to two different things?
 - If “no,” then how should task #2 be accomplished?
 - Would the anticipated “Ecosystem-Socioeconomic Profiles” suffice and, if so, will they be ready in time?

Team recommendation (11/17)

- The Teams recommended that the coordinators and co-chairs work with the FEP Team through chairs Kerim Aydin and Diana Evans to appoint a workgroup that will develop a process for responding to the SSC recommendation (both task #1 and task #2), which should include addressing the questions and issues identified in these minutes, with the understanding that the workgroup will need to obtain Joint Team approval of the process in sufficient time to meet the deadlines identified in the SSC recommendation.

SSC response (12/17)

- “The SSC does not think that the Plan Team coordinators and co-chairs and FEP Team chairs need to appoint a workgroup for this task.”
- Full page and a half of minutes from the 12/17 minutes were devoted to clarifying the 10/17 request
- However, Team chairs and coordinators were still confused with respect to task #2 from the 10/17 SSC request
 - Agreed procedure for responding to task #1 will be given under the “Response to SSC requests” agenda item
- Lengthy dialogue with SSC co-chairs between meetings led to a decision to place the item on the agenda for the 6/18 SSC meeting

SSC re-clarification of task #2 (6/18; 1 of 2)

- “This request was recently clarified by the SSC by replacing the terms ‘ecosystem **status**’ and ‘stock assessment **status**’ with ‘Ecosystem Status Report **information**’ and ‘Stock Assessment **information**,’ where the potential determinations for each will consist of ‘Okay’ and ‘Not Okay,’ and by issuing the following guidance:
 - “The SSC clarifies that ‘stock assessment status’ is a fundamental requirement of the SAFEs and is not really very useful to this exercise, because virtually all stocks are never overfished nor is overfishing occurring.
 - “Rather the SSC suggests that recent trends in recruitment and stock abundance could indicate warning signs well before a critical official status determination is reached. It may also be useful to consider some sort of ratio of how close a stock is to a limit or target reference point (e.g., B/B35). Thus, additional results for the stock assessments will need to be considered to make the ... determinations.”

SSC re-clarification of task #2 (6/18; 2 of 2)

- Guidance, continued:
 - “The SSC retracts its previous request for development of an **ecosystem status for each stock/complex**. Instead, while considering ecosystem status report information, it may be useful to attempt to develop thresholds for action concerning **broad-scale ecosystem changes** that are likely to impact multiple stocks/complexes.
 - “Implementation of these stock and ecosystem determinations will be **an iterative process and will require a dialogue** between the stock assessment authors, Plan Teams, ecosystem modelers, ESR editors, and the SSC.

Action items

Let the dialogue begin!

- Summarizing, the objective is to develop criteria for determining:
 1. Whether the “stock assessment information” *for each stock* is OK
 - This may involve:
 - Warning signs well before a critical official status determination is reached
 - Some sort of ratio of how close a stock is to a limit or target reference point (e.g., B/B35)
 2. Whether the “ESR information” *for the ecosystem* is OK
 - This may involve:
 - Thresholds for action concerning broad-scale ecosystem changes that are likely to impact multiple stocks
- Before doing any of the above, it might be helpful to develop definitions of “stock assessment information” and “ESR information”
 - E.g., does the SSC really mean “*information?*”