

DRAFT REPORT
of the
SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE
to the
NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
December 7th – 9th, 2015

The SSC met from December 7th through 9th at the Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK.

Members present were:

Farron Wallace, Chair
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

Chris Anderson
University of Washington

Lew Coggins
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Sherri Dressel
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Kari Fenske
Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Brad Harris
Alaska Pacific University

Anne Hollowed
NOAA Fisheries—AFSC

George Hunt
University of Washington

Gordon Kruse
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Seth Macinko
University of Rhode Island

Steve Martell
Intl. Pacific Halibut Commission

Franz Mueter
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Lew Queirolo
NOAA Fisheries—Alaska Region

Matt Reimer
University of Alaska Anchorage

Alison Whitman
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Members absent were:

Jennifer Burns
University of Alaska Anchorage

Robert Clark
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Terry Quinn
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Kate Reedy
Idaho State University Pocatello

C-2 BSAI and C-3 GOA specifications and SAFE report

Table 1. SSC recommendations for BSAI groundfish OFLs and ABCs for 2016 and 2017 are shown with the 2015 OFL, ABC, TAC, and Catch amounts in metric tons (2015 catches through November 7th from AKR Catch Accounting include CDQ). None of the SSC recommendations differed from those of the GOA Plan Team.

Species	Area	2015			2015 Catch as of 11/7/15	2016		2017	
		OFL	ABC	TAC		OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	EBS	3,330,000	1,637,000	1,310,000	1,318,833	3,910,000	2,090,000	3,540,000	2,019,000
	AI	36,005	29,659	19,000	916	39,075	32,227	44,455	36,664
	Bogoslof	21,200	15,900	100	733	31,800	23,850	31,906	23,850
Pacific cod	BS	346,000	255,000	240,000	202,626	390,000	255,000	412,000	255,000
	AI	23,400	17,600	9,422	9,060	23,400	17,600	23,400	17,600
Sablefish	BS	1,575	1,333	1,333	209	1,304	1,151	1,241	1,052
	AI	2,128	1,802	1,802	431	1,766	1,557	1,681	1,423
Yellowfin sole	BSAI	266,400	248,800	149,000	122,363	228,100	211,700	219,200	203,500
Greenland turbot	BSAI	3,903	3,172	2,648	2,199	4,194	3,462	7,416	6,132
	BS	n/a	2,448	2,448	2,086	n/a	2,673	n/a	4,734
	AI	n/a	724	200	113	n/a	789	n/a	1,398
Arrowtooth flounder	BSAI	93,856	80,547	22,000	11,005	94,035	80,701	84,156	72,216
Kamchatka flounder	BSAI	10,500	9,000	6,500	4,961	11,100	9,500	11,700	10,000
Northern rock sole	BSAI	187,600	181,700	69,250	45,350	165,900	161,100	149,400	145,000
Flathead sole	BSAI	79,419	66,130	24,250	10,955	79,562	66,250	77,544	64,580
Alaska plaice	BSAI	54,000	44,900	18,500	14,269	49,000	41,000	46,800	39,100
Other flatfish	BSAI	17,700	13,250	3,620	2,394	17,414	13,061	17,414	13,061
Pacific Ocean perch	BSAI	42,558	34,988	32,021	30,034	40,529	33,320	38,589	31,724
	BS	n/a	8,771	8,021	6,588	n/a	8,353	n/a	7,953
	EAI	n/a	8,312	8,000	7,861	n/a	7,916	n/a	7,537
	CAI	n/a	7,723	7,000	6,777	n/a	7,355	n/a	7,002
	WAI	n/a	10,182	9,000	8,808	n/a	9,696	n/a	9,232
Northern rockfish	BSAI	15,337	12,488	3,250	7,230	14,689	11,960	14,085	11,468
Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish	BSAI	560	453	349	180	693	561	855	694
	EBS/EAI	n/a	149	149	65	n/a	179	n/a	216
	CAI/WAI	n/a	304	200	115	n/a	382	n/a	478
Shortraker rockfish	BSAI	690	518	250	149	690	518	690	518
Other rockfish	BSAI	1,667	1,250	880	683	1,667	1,250	1,667	1,250
	BS	n/a	695	325	184	n/a	695	n/a	695
	AI	n/a	555	555	499	n/a	555	n/a	555
Atka mackerel	BSAI	125,297	106,000	54,500	53,265	104,749	90,340	99,490	85,840
	EAI/BS	n/a	38,492	27,000	26,342	n/a	30,832	n/a	29,296
	CAI	n/a	33,108	17,000	16,669	n/a	27,216	n/a	25,860
	WAI	n/a	34,400	10,500	10,253	n/a	32,292	n/a	30,684
Skates	BSAI	49,575	41,658	25,700	24,886	50,215	42,134	47,674	39,943
Sculpins	BSAI	52,365	39,725	4,700	4,612	52,365	39,725	52,365	39,725
Sharks	BSAI	1,363	1,022	125	96	1,363	1,022	1,363	1,022
Squids	BSAI	2,624	1,970	400	2,360	6,912	5,184	6,912	5,184
Octopuses	BSAI	3,452	2,589	400	370	3,452	2,589	3,452	2,589
Total	BSAI	4,769,174	2,848,454	2,000,000	1,870,168	5,323,974	3,236,762	4,935,455	3,128,135

^a The SSC recommendation for “maximum subarea species catch” of Blackspotted/Rougheye rockfish in the WAI portion of the CAI/WAI is 58 mt in 2016 and 73 mt in 2017.

Table 2. SSC recommendations for GOA groundfish OFLs and ABCs for 2016 and 2017, shown with 2015 OFL, ABC, TAC, and catch amounts in metric tons (2014 catches through November 7th, 2015 from AKR catch accounting system). Recommendations are marked in **bold** where SSC recommendations differ from those of the BSAI Plan Team.

Species	Area	2015				2016		2017	
		OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pollock	W(61)	-	31,634	31,634	28,730		56,494 ^a		55,657 ^a
	C(62)	-	97,579	97,579	81,324		124,927 ^a		123,078 ^a
	C(63)	-	52,594	52,594	52,396		57,183 ^a		56,336 ^a
	WYAK	-	4,719	4,719	250		9,348 ^a		9,209 ^a
	Subtotal	256,545	191,309	186,526	162,700	322,858	254,310	289,937	250,544
	EYAK/SEO	16,833	12,625	12,625		13,226	9,920	13,226	9,920
	Total	273,378	203,934	199,151	162,700	336,084	264,230	303,163	260,464
Pacific cod	W		38,702	27,091	18,038		40,503		34,998
	C		61,320	45,990	33,372		49,312		42,610
	E		2,828	2,121	87		8,785		7,592
	Total	140,300	102,850	75,202	51,497	116,700	98,600	100,800	85,200
Sablefish	W		1,474	1,474	1,012		1,272		1,163
	C		4,658	4,658	4,570		4,023		3,678
	WYAK		1,708	1,708	1,802		1,475		1,348
	SEO		2,682	2,682	2,822		2,317		2,118
	Total	12,425	10,522	10,522	10,206	10,326	9,087	9,825	8,307
Shallow-water flatfish	W		22,074	13,250	274		20,851		19,159
	C		19,297	19,297	2,959		19,242		17,680
	WYAK		2,209	2,209	1		3,177		2,919
	EYAK/SEO		625	625	1		1,094		1,006
	Total	54,207	44,205	35,381	3,235	54,520	44,364	50,220	40,764
Deep-water flatfish	W		301	301	54		186		187
	C		3,689	3,689	183		3,495		3,516
	WYAK		5,474	5,474	2		2,997		3,015
	EYAK/SEO		3,870	3,870	3		2,548		2,563
	Total	15,993	13,334	13,334	242	11,102	9,226	11,168	9,281
Rex sole	W		1,258	1,258	76		1,315		1,318
	C		5,816	5,816	1,793		4,445		4,453
	WYAK		772	772			766		767
	EYAK/SEO		1,304	1,304			967		969
	Total	11,597	9,150	9,150	1,869	9,791	7,493	9,810	7,507
Arrowtooth flounder	W		30,752	14,500	557		28,183		28,659
	C		114,170	75,000	17,857		107,981		109,804
	WYAK		36,771	6,900	37		37,368		37,999
	EYAK/SEO		11,228	6,900	22		12,656		12,870
	Total	226,390	192,921	103,300	18,473	219,430	186,188	196,714	189,332
Flathead sole	W		12,767	8,650	199		11,027		11,080
	C		24,876	15,400	1,707		20,211		20,307
	WYAK		3,535	3,535	1		2,930		2,944
	EYAK/SEO		171	171			852		856
	Total	50,792	41,349	27,756	1,907	42,840	35,020	43,060	35,187

^a W/C/WYAK subarea amounts for pollock are apportionments of subarea ACL that allow for regulatory reapportionment

Table 2. continued.		2015				2016		2017	
Species	Area	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch	OFL	ABC	OFL	ABC
Pacific Ocean perch	W		2,302	2,302	2,038		2,737		2,709
	C		15,873	15,873	14,196		17,033		16,860
	WYAK		2,014	2,014	1,980		2,847		2,818
	W/C/WYAK	23,406	20,189	20,189	18,214	26,313	22,617	26,045	22,387
	SEO	954	823	823		2,118	1,820	2,096	1,802
	Total	24,360	21,012	21,012	18,214	28,431	24,437	28,141	24,189
Northern rockfish ^b	W		1,226	1,226	978		457		430
	C		3,772	3,772	2,957		3,547		3,338
	E						4*		4*
	Total	5,961	4,998	4,998	3,935	4,783	4,004	4,501	3,768
Shortraker rockfish	W		92	92	49		38		38
	C		397	397	254		301		301
	E		834	834	264		947		947
	Total	1,764	1,323	1,323	567	1,715	1,286	1,715	1,286
Dusky rockfish	W		296	296	183		173		159
	C		3,336	3,336	2,551		4,147		3,791
	WYAK		1,288	1,288	1		275		251
	EYAK/SEO		189	189	7		91		83
	Total	6,246	5,109	5,109	2,742	5,733	4,686	5,253	4,284
Rougheye and blackspotted rockfish	W		115	115	29		105		105
	C		632	632	345		707		705
	E		375	375	155		516		515
	Total	1,345	1,122	1,122	529	1,596	1,328	1,592	1,325
Demersal shelf rockfish	Total	438	225	225	108	364	231	364	231
Thornyhead rockfish	W		235	235	232		291		291
	C		875	875	581		988		988
	E		731	731	211		682		682
	Total	2,454	1,841	1,841	1,024	2,615	1,961	2,615	1,961
Other rockfish (Other slope) ^b	W/C		1,031	1,031	1,041		1,534		1,534
	WYAK		580	580	34		574		574
	EYAK/SEO		2,469	200	19		3,665*		3,665*
	Total	5,347	4,080	1,811	1,094	7,424	5,773	7,424	5,773
Atka mackerel	Total	6,200	4,700	2,000	1,191	6,200	4,700	6,200	4,700
Big skate	W		731	731	182		908		908
	C		1,257	1,257	1,173		1,850		1,850
	E		1,267	1,267	55		1,056		1,056
	Total	4,340	3,255	3,255	1,410	5,086	3,814	5,086	3,814
Longnose skate	W		152	152	98		61		61
	C		2,090	2,090	1,055		2,513		2,513
	E		976	976	311		632		632
	Total	4,291	3,218	3,218	1,464	4,274	3,206	4,274	3,206
Other skates	Total	2,980	2,235	2,235	1,476	2,558	1,919	2,558	1,919
Sculpins	GOA-wide	7,448	5,569	5,569	941	7,338	5,591	7,338	5,591
Sharks	GOA-wide	7,986	5,989	5,989	1,306	6,020	4,514	6,020	4,514
Squids	GOA-wide	1,530	1,148	1,148	408	1,530	1,148	1,530	1,148
Octopuses	GOA-wide	2,009	1,507	1,507	909	6,504	4,878	6,504	4,878
Total		870,064	685,597	536,158	287,447	892,964	727,684	815,875	708,629

* Note that the 4 mt of EGOA northern rockfish is excluded from that stock's total as it is managed as part of the EGOA "other rockfish" category.

Stock Structure workgroup report

The SSC received a summary on the Stock Structure /Spatial management workgroup Report from Diana Stram (Council staff). The workgroup was formed and met twice since October in order to meet the Council's request that a small group comprised of Plan Team, Council staff, NMFS RO, and SSC members discuss outstanding issues of stock structure/spatial management and make recommendations for moving forward in this cycle with BSAI blackspotted/rougheyed rockfish and provide clarifications of the Council's policy adopted October 2013. The SSC further recommends that the GOA skate also move forward on the time schedule set by the workgroup. The SSC notes that there is already action moving forward to set MRA's for big and longnose that should resolve current concern level. The workgroup discussed and made recommendations to address issues raised in the 2014 Joint Plan Team minutes (attached). The SSC recommends that the Council adopt all workgroup recommendations that will help clarify and address outstanding issues.

The workgroup recommendations include:

1. That the Council clarify that this policy applies equally to both spatial structure/management and stock structure issues. The workgroup recommends that the Council rename the policy as the "Stock Structure and Spatial Management policy."
2. That the Joint Plan Teams revise their spatial management and stock structure policy "with the understanding that the list of alternative tools/options to be included under Step 2 of the Council process should always include separate harvest specifications at the TAC level, the ABC level, the OFL level, or all three"
3. In cases of little or no concern, where no action needs to be taken to incorporate "This includes situations where information is insufficient to determine a level of concern, which may motivate additional research."
4. The Council amend Step 2 of its policy to include "This suite of tools should always include separate harvest specifications at the TAC level, the ABC level, the OFL level, or all three."
5. The workgroup clarifies "that, from the perspective of stock structure/spatial management issues, the differences in spatial management between FMP's reflect reasonable responses to available information."
6. The Council adopt workgroup timeframe for instituting spatial stock structure changes that are in conjunction with Step 2 of the Council's policy, with the understanding that a somewhat longer time frame may be necessary for actions involving rulemaking.
7. The Council clarify that degree of concern is a function of both the strength of evidence of stock structure and the extent to which the fishery is impacting that structure.

Additionally the SSC support workgroup recommendations that the Council provide clarification on the following points in order to move forward in 2016 for BSAI BS/RE:

- Who should propose additional management tools and what is the role of the public in identifying them?
- Who will evaluate the suite of tools?
- What is (or, is there) a continued role for the workgroup in this process?