


MEMORANDUM

TO: SSC only

FROM: Chris Oliver 
Executive Director

DATE: February 1, 2006

SUBJECT: Groundfish Management

ESTIMATED TIME 3 HOURS (all D items)

ACTION REQUIRED

- (c) Review Other Species stock assessments (SSC only).
- (d) Review Species of Concern assessments (SSC only).
- (e) Lower Trophic Level Modeling Workshop (SSC only).

BACKGROUND

Other Species stock assessments

In December 2005, the SSC scheduled this review of draft stock assessments for 'other species' as a first step in the preparation of amendments to the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs. Under proposed amendments, separate specifications for sharks, skates, sculpins, octopus, and possibly grenadiers, would replace the other species category. Separate specifications are already set for BSAI squid and GOA skates. In 2004, the SSC reviewed draft assessments for BSAI and GOA sharks. In 2005, the SSC approved the methodology used in draft assessments for BSAI sharks, skates, sculpins, and octopus. At this meeting, Alaska Fisheries Science Center scientists will present new assessments for sharks, squid, sculpins, and octopus for the GOA and grenadier in the GOA and BSAI; these were distributed to the SSC last week. After SSC approval of all group-level stock assessment methodologies, staff will commence development of the EA/RIR/IRFA to amend the FMPs.

Species of Concern assessments

In 2005, AFSC scientists developed criterion for evaluating the level of concern for non-target groundfish species. This work was prompted by ongoing management attention on rockfish. Forty species and species complexes were examined. This method provides an objective method for identifying target and non-target species that may require additional review by the AFSC and NPFMC. Once species of concern are identified, the Council may consider additional conservation and management measures for these species. The document was distributed to the SSC last week.

Lower Trophic Level Modeling Workshop

A workshop on biophysical modeling will be convened by the SSC on Wednesday morning. This workshop will provide an update of on-going efforts with respect to lower trophic level models and how those might be used to link to models of upper trophic levels such as fish, crab, marine mammals and seabirds. This is a follow up to last year's workshop on ecosystem and multi-species models that focused

on upper trophic levels. Presentations will be made by scientists at the Fisheries Oceanography Coordinated Investigations (FOCI) group of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC). These presentations focus on climate forcing of ecosystem models and coupled biological and physical models in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea for predictions of fish recruitment and potential regime shift impacts on fish populations. The goal of this workshop is to review the current state of the art of these models, data needs and requirements, and how they might be used in management advice.