2027 Center for Independent Experts AFSC Stock Assessment Reviews

Ensuring State-of-the-Art Scientific Advice for North Pacific Fisheries

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November 2027 Joint Groundfish Plan Team

Ensuring All Stock Assessments Are Routinely CIE Reviewed

All AFSC stock assessments must undergo routine CIE reviews

Requested 2027 Groundfish Reviews

In Person Reviews

- BSAI Greenland Turbot

Desk Reviews

- BSAI Rougheye/Blackspotted Rockfish
- AI Pollock
- AK Data Limited Assessment Method (ORCS) and application to GOA Sleeper Shark
- BSAI Alaska Plaice

Ensuring All Stock Assessments Are Routinely CIE Reviewed

We are conducting in-person reviews for high-priority high-interest stocks

- Reserve in-person panels for unusually contentious or complex assessments where live deliberation clearly adds value.
- Stocks that are fished harder / closer to TAC
- Stocks that have new data coming into the stock assessments or that may need stock assessments restructured

The number of in-person reviews that can be conducted each year are limited

- Staffing capacity
- Aligning 3 outside experts, lead authors, and identifying a review week can be challenging.

Ensuring All Stock Assessments Are Routinely CIE Reviewed

Desk Reviews

- Removes scheduling bottleneck = multiple reviews can run concurrently
- No need to align calendars of 3+ outside experts, AFSC authors, and locations
- Shortens the request-to-report timeline
- More cost effective
- Faster turnaround
- Access to a broader pool of reviewers: Opens the door to experts who can't travel and reduces reviewer recruitment delays
- Lower logistics burden on scientific staff
- No multi-day presentation prep by assessment authors
- Time saved from hosting panels goes toward producing operational assessments and high-priority research

Desk Reviews Tested During 2024-2026

High-quality reviewer engagement and reviews

- Trialed for 4 stocks: DSR, rex sole, dover sole (deepwater flatfish), yellowfin sole
- Meets NMFS/CIE quality and documentation standards

No change to the core deliverable

- Independent written reports

Limits groupthink and deference dynamics

- Independent written evaluations limit panel groupthink or deference to a dominant personality that can occur in live discussion

Preserves independent reasoning

- Each reviewer's analysis is documented on its own merits

Resilience to disruption: No travel/weather or foreign national reviewer issues