

Draft SSC Report December 2019



**Balance of SSC Oral Report:
Agenda Items B1, D4, C6 and C7**

B1 Plan Team Nominations

- The SSC reviewed the nomination of Andrew Olson to the Scallop Plan Team. The SSC finds Mr. Olson to be well-qualified and ***recommends*** the Council approve his nomination

D4 Comments on NS1 Technical Guidelines

- In 2016, NMFS published a final rule to revise the NS1 guidelines to include two provisions: (1) carry-over of unused catch and (2) a phase-in approach to catch limits. The report provides a useful summary of potential benefits and risks of these two provisions. It provides technical guidance and is non-binding.

Carry-over

- The SSC ***cautions against*** the use of carry-over provisions to directed groundfish catch, particularly with respect to fisheries managed under the BSAI Groundfish FMP
 - 2 million ton OY cap is constraining. TAC negotiations require full knowledge of the catch allowed under the ABC and OFL. Allowing a carry-over of unused catch from a given year could disrupt this process
 - The high frequency of NPFMC stock assessment makes it unclear how carry-over would work, as ABCs/OFLs are re-estimated each year

D4 Comments on NS1 Technical Guidelines

Carry-over (continued)

- It is conceivable that the Council may wish to consider carry-over provisions for special cases
 - For example, safety could be a special case where the NPFMC might want to consider flexibility for modest carry-overs in directed fisheries
 - However, since many fisheries are rationalized, the NPFMC management system already provides opportunities to avoid severe weather
- If the Council elects to bring forward a carry-over provision for a particular fishery, the SSC ***recommends*** preserving managers ability to reduce or eliminate the carry-over if a conservation concern arises

D4 Comments on NS1 Technical Guidelines

Phase-in Approach to Catch Limits

- The NPFMC has some experience using phase-in provisions when annual status determinations indicate a large increase in the ABC
- Such circumstances can arise when an assessment model produces large changes in management reference points or when a large, uncertain, year-class enters the fishery
- In such cases, the SSC occasionally adopts a precautionary “stair-step” approach for increasing the ABC over multiple years as a buffer against assessment uncertainty
- The SSC ***supports*** continuation of this approach on a case-by-case basis
- The SSC ***does not support*** the use of phase-in provisions when annual recommendations suggest that a substantial reduction in the ABC is required

D4 Comments on NS1 Technical Guidelines

Final Recommendations

- Two options:
 - Alternative analyses on a case-by-case basis, or
 - Comprehensive evaluation of the policies before wide-scale adoption
- The report's preferred alternative is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the carry-over and phase-in provisions within the ABC control rules before adopting them as revised ABC control rules in the FMPs
- The SSC agrees that a comprehensive analysis (e.g., management strategy evaluation) would inform the NPFMC of the risks and benefits associated with adoption of one or both of these provisions and could help inform the effectiveness of “stair-step” or other potential alternatives
- However, in the SSC's experience, phase-in provisions are typically case specific and it may be difficult to “hard wire” them into new harvest control rules in a FMP amendment

C6 Saint Mathew Island Blue King Crab

- The SSC ***recommends*** that the current draft EA is adequate for final action and meets the requirements for a formal rebuilding plan
- The SSC noted that recent productivity of this stock may lead to extended rebuilding periods with little probability of recovery to currently specified B_{msy} levels
- The SSC ***requests*** additional discussion and detail in the document relating to:
 - The potential response to increased future bycatch
 - Specified B_{msy} and state harvest strategy rules
 - The fit of the Ricker model used as the basis for recruitment projections
 - Alternative projections under recent recruitment levels
 - Consideration of habitat vulnerability indicators

C6 Saint Mathew Island Blue King Crab

- The SSC *recommends*:
 - Addition of further community engagement and dependency data from the pre-1999/2000 closure, and quota shares ownership by community over time
 - Updating of the Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profile (ESP)

C7 Central GOA Rockfish Reauthorization

- The SSC *appreciates* the authors' comprehensive analysis
- The SSC *recommends* the document be released for final action
- The SSC *noted* that, while the Social Impact Assessment was very good, it would have been much improved had social science fieldwork been conducted for the 5-year program review