

Appendix 1: AFSC background document and terms of reference for AFSC-SSC Working Group, provided in advance of September 10 2018 meeting

FY19 & FY20 Survey Priorities: Three & Four Boat Scenarios

Basic Assumptions:

- Bottom trawl surveys are multi-species surveys and should continue to be so.
- Continuation of standard survey coverage requires five boats.
- In the absence of information on survey impact, it is critical to complete the entire eastern Bering sea shelf survey without eliminating stations or increasing the distance between stations.
- Present multi-species assessments require the entire geographic extent of the Bering Sea slope, Gulf of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands survey area. The only options available to cut these surveys involve removing depth strata and/or occupying fewer stations in each stratum.
- Current assessments assume that either our present surveys encompass entire spatial extent of the fish populations (Tier 5 assessments), or that the fraction of the fish population remains constant within the survey area. Neither of these assumptions are met for some important commercial species. To meet these assumptions in the Bering Sea, it is necessary to conduct the NBS survey. However, without knowledge of the movement of fish across the international border with Russia, our survey may still not meet the basic assumption. Initiating cooperation with Russia (for the Bering Sea) and Canada (for the Gulf of Alaska) to address the movement question is advised.
- The FY19 three boat scenario discussed with the Council does not include the summer and winter GoA acoustic-trawl surveys for pollock/rockfish. We assume these surveys will proceed as planned, although the Shumagin survey may be delayed due to dry dock maintenance and repairs scheduled for winter 2018/2019.

“Terms of Reference”

The questions we would ask you to address are:

1. What are the ranked order of priorities for our present suite of bottom trawl surveys: the eastern Bering Sea shelf, eastern Bering Sea slope, northern Bering Sea shelf, Gulf of Alaska, and Aleutian Islands?
2. If the Center has four, rather than five charter vessels on contract in FY19, we propose to put two vessels on the eastern Bering Sea shelf and two in the Gulf of Alaska. If additional funds are available, then these will be used to support a northern Bering Sea survey. Do you agree?
3. Given the answer to Question #2, which surveys should we prioritize for FY20 under a four-boat scenario?
4. If the Center is only able to fund 3 charter vessels in FY19, which survey(s) should we attempt?
 - a. Eastern Bering Sea shelf (2 boats) + slope (1 boat)
 - b. Gulf of Alaska (all three boats)
 - c. Gulf of Alaska (2 boats) + eastern Bering Sea slope (1 boat)
5. Given the answer to Question #4, which surveys should we attempt for FY20 under a three boat scenario?

