

Draft SSC Report

April 2022



Balance of SSC Report

General SSC Comments

- The SSC ***acknowledges*** the contributions of Dr. Jie Zheng during his 32 years with ADF&G. His expertise and advice will be missed.
- The SSC ***thanks*** NPFMC staff for their extraordinary efforts over the last two years.
- Finally, the SSC ***welcomed*** the opportunity to meet Mr. Jon Kurland, the new NOAA Regional Administrator, and looks forward to working with him.

B-1 Ideas for Council Process Changes

- The SSC received a report summarizing the Meeting of the Executive Committee and SSC and AP leadership
- The SSC ***supports*** the priorities identified in the report, in particular the need to reassess the current timeline for crab and groundfish harvest specifications
- The SSC ***highlights*** the need to engage the SSC, the Plan Teams and the stock assessment authors as soon as possible in any future revisions to the timeline
- The SSC ***suggests*** that, when appropriate, a subgroup of members of these groups could be formed to inform any process changes

Other administrative issues: SSC workshop

- The SSC *suggests* holding a February 2023 workshop on the rapid changes that have been observed in the northern Bering Sea and southern Chukchi Sea regions and their consequences
- A major goal of the workshop would be to further develop proactive approaches on how to address these issues
- The SSC tasked a subgroup of its members with identifying an appropriate focus and scope for the workshop that does not duplicate ongoing efforts

B-2 Seabird Working Group Report

- The SSC received a written report from the NMFS Alaska Groundfish and Halibut Seabird Working Group (Working Group), which includes contributions from NMFS and the USFWS
 - The SSC **highlighted** the value of two-way dialogues during informational reports and looks forward to an in-person update next year
- The SSC noted the apparent effectiveness of pot gear in reducing bycatch in the sablefish IFQ fishery, and that there were no takes of ESA-Listed species in 2021

B-2 Seabird Working Group Report

- The SSC ***supports*** the USFWS and NMFS outreach efforts including materials for identifying seabirds and mitigation measures (e.g. lighting on vessels)
- The SSC ***suggests*** that data on historical trends in population size, trends in the frequency and magnitude of die-offs, and spatial information on foraging distributions and/or shifts in distributions be included in future reports
- The SSC looks forward to seeing the results of the efforts to extract, and synthesize data from observer logs in future years

D-2 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

BS-FEP Team Report

- The SSC received updates from the BS-FEP Team on the Strategic Ecosystem Evaluation/Health Report
- The SSC **recommends** consistently using the title ‘Strategic Ecosystem Evaluation Report’ in the future (omitting the term ‘Health’)
- The SSC **recommends** that the Team select indicators that remain most informative under shifting baseline conditions
- The SSC **recommends** that the process for evaluating indicators relative to their respective ecosystem goals be iterative
- The SSC **supports** the BS FEP Team decision to delay expanding the process into other large marine ecosystems

D-2 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) Report

- The SSC received an update on the Task Force's progress
- The SSC looks forward to reviewing Climate Readiness Synthesis (CRS) report in October
- The SSC **supports** plans to identify near-term actions that can be taken to advance climate readiness
- The SSC **suggests** that the CCTF consider outlining a process and timeline for revisiting and updating the CRS report in the future.
- The SSC **supports** the CCTF exploring ways to increase public engagement in their work

D-2 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce (LKTKS) Report

- The SSC received an update on Taskforce activities with a focus on the *Draft Protocol for Identifying, Analyzing, and Incorporating Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Information in the North Pacific* and the newly developed LKTKS search engine
- The SSC **finds** the draft protocol enlightening and helpful
- The SSC **encourages** further development of the protocol
- The SSC recognizes the value of the search engine and commends the efforts that went into its creation

D-2 Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Task Force (LKTGS) Report

- The SSC ***recommends*** early implementation of several of the practical steps outlined on p. 21 of the Draft Protocol. These include:
 - Council staff use of the LKTGS search engine for current and new analytic decision-informing products and
 - Modifying analytical templates used by Council staff for those same products where practicable
- Early use could provide timely feedback to protocol and search engine developers
- Early identification of potentially impacted Tribes and communities could make outreach and formal consultation (as relevant) more robust

D-3 IPCC Update

- The SSC received a presentation on the IPCC 6th Assessment Report
 - Working Group I - The Physical Science Basis
 - Working Group II - Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability
- The SSC inquired about what lessons from the IPCC process may be helpful as the SSC and NPFMC consider climate-adaptive strategies for the future. The report author highlighted:
 - Leveraging a multinational and cross-disciplinary approach, engaging expertise from multiple fields
 - Drawing upon examples and progress by other panarctic countries confronting similar challenges

D-3 IPCC Update

- The SSC **suggests** that future presentations on climate readiness include:
 - Additional information on the global models used for predicting biomass changes in the Bering Sea and Arctic
 - Further discussion of what stocks are projected to be most impacted
- The SSC noted that the NPFMCs FMPs rely on the “prevailing ecological and environmental conditions”
- In light of IPCC projections suggesting increased variability and dramatic change
 - The SSC **suggests** renewed discussion of more dynamic reference points and explicit planning for a future with lower predictability

D-4 BSIA Regional Framework – Review and Recommendations

- The SSC reviewed the BSIA Regional Framework drafted by AFSC in response to a NOAA Fisheries BSIA Procedural Directive, which focuses on BSAI as applied to stock status determination and OFL / ABC setting
- The Regional Framework outlines timelines and actions for groundfish, crab and scallop assessment review and approval, while providing comments on procedures for salmon and Arctic fishery management
- The SSC *finds* that the Draft Regional Framework provides an adequate response to the BSIA Directive

D-4 BSIA Regional Framework – Review and Recommendations

- The SSC *recommends* some additions and clarifications before the Regional Framework is submitted, including the following:
 - As ESRs and ESPs are part of the process of stock status determination and catch setting, the SSC recommends these be included in the timelines as one of the steps leading to BSIA
 - NS2 Guidelines on inclusiveness regarding relevant local and traditional knowledge (LKTK) should be recognized as part of the BSIA process and LKTK should be included in the timeline as appropriate