

SCS8 Workshop, August 26-28, 2023
Seaport Hotel, Boston, MA
Meeting Planning Document
Working DRAFT

Theme: “Applying ABC control rules in a changing environment”

Theme Overview

- A core function of a Council’s SSC is to provide recommendations for setting acceptable biological catch (ABC) consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and to support strategic decision making on ABC control rules.
- SSCs have been challenged in applying ABC control rules in a manner that reliably achieves management goals (e.g., preventing overfishing, stock rebuilding) given the degree of climate and ecosystem change and scientific uncertainty that Council regions are experiencing.
- Ecosystem information is increasingly being integrated into the tactical application and strategic decision making on ABC control rules.
- Social science can provide critical insight to the SSCs and Councils on the potential for control rules to achieve management goals and how fisheries and communities can adapt to dynamic conditions.

Expected Attendance (~70 total)

- 32 representatives of SSCs (SSC members or staff, 4 per Council)
- 1 SCS8 Chair
- 6 NEFMC staff/contractor for logistical and facilitation support
- 2 additional keynote speakers (outside of SSC members)
- 4 NMFS staff on steering committee
- 2 NMFS MSE WG staff
- 3 Janet Coit + staff (to be confirmed)
- 20 Council members/public

Draft Agenda/Session Sub-Themes

Context Setting: Current approaches to defining ABC control rules and challenges in their application

Topics to be covered

- Overview of the ABC control rules SSCs currently applied now (Typology, pre-work request).
- Identify how rules integrate ecosystem and social science considerations. Discuss current challenges SSCs face when applying ABC control rules in the context of ecosystem change.

- What are pathways for revising ABC control rules, and what flexibility is there for modification/change?
- What is possible under MSA for the inclusion of social science information in defining ABCs and in the tactical application of control rules?

Sub-Theme 1: Advances in ecosystem science and assessment to inform ABC control rules in a dynamic environment

Topics to be covered

- Actionable ecosystem reports: defining trends, regime shifts, and fish productivity and distribution changes for use in assessment and management
- Advances in analytical assessments that incorporate climate information and time varying stock dynamics.
- Advances in data limited approaches and how we account for dynamic changes in these types of models (single species, stock complexes).

Sub-Theme 2: Application of social science to achieve management goals under dynamic conditions.

Topics to be covered

- Advances in social science: what social and economic information is available to SSCs and how is this information used in decision making?
- How are SSC's using their expertise in the social sciences? How can this be improved?
- Other uses of this information: indirect applications, e.g., revision of risk policy, etc., to inform ABCs (phased in approaches-new flexibility, concerns about catch stability)? ACLs? If required data is unavailable, what is needed to obtain it? How to address in risk consideration? Defining buffer between OFL and ABC.
- Potential value and economic impacts of use of time-averaged Fs

Sub-Theme 3: Adaptation of reference points, control rules, and rebuilding plans to changing environment

Topics to be covered

- When to revise reference points in the face of change (triggers, criteria)
- How to define reference points in a dynamic environment (prevailing conditions, dynamic reference points)
- Stock definitions (spatial definitions) and status determinations (Changing status and unknown status)
- Testing robustness of ABC control rules to environmental change (MSE)
- Use of empirical reference points and indicators in the absence of analytical assessments (management of data limited stocks)
- Assumptions and consistency across short-term and long-term projections