

## **Background**

The NRCC stock assessment process now includes a long-term schedule of management track assessments, with, in many cases, higher frequency of assessments than in the past. As a result of the more frequent assessments and the schedule, which provides certainty regarding when new information will be available for management, we anticipate less need for "data updates" in intervening years between assessments.

To the extent that data updates are still desired by any NRCC members, the Center continues to work on automating various data processing and management systems. The primary focus of those efforts is on improving the efficiency and quality of stock assessments, but those systems also can be a source for automated data updates or access to data summaries, etc. At this point, those automated systems are still in development, and the types of automated data summaries available vary by stock.

Currently, the Center does not have a functional system to provide "push-button" data updates for all stocks. Until such a system exists, any data update request will require stock assessment staff time to develop the update, though we hope the time required will diminish as we develop our automated systems. Recognizing the work required, it is important to carefully consider the value and use of any requested data updates.

## **Request**

At the November 2019 NRCC meeting, the NRCC requested guidance on the content of simple, low-cost data updates. The NEFSC recognizes that the content of data updates is a bit of a moving target, as what is readily accessible to be provided for data updates is expected to change through time as we expand our automated data processing systems and as we work to merge the GARFO and NEFSC catch accounting and monitoring systems into one shared system. Below we provide guidance on what can be provided by NEFSC in 2020 for data updates and some discussion about ongoing efforts that may result in ability to provide enhanced data updates in 2021 and beyond.

## **2020 Data Updates**

Based on an NEFSC evaluation of existing data availability, data management, and data processing systems, and considerations of both required workload and desired consistency among requested data updates, NEFSC can provide the following core information for data updates requested by NRCC members in 2020:

- Landings: recreational and commercial
- Index of trend (i.e., appropriate NEFSC survey index for most stocks)
- Survey length/size distributions (for recruits/cohort tracking)

In 2020, NEFSC is not able to provide (a) indices-at-age or catch-at-age, (b) survey data not in our federal databases (e.g., state survey data), or (c) discards, without significant additional work by staff that would go beyond what is anticipated for "low-cost/free" data updates.

## **2020 Constraints and Future Developments**

Age-based indices require extensive aging work beyond the work by assessment staff, and we don't anticipate age data being available for stocks that are not scheduled for a management track assessment. State, and other, survey data on the other hand may be "available," but NEFSC currently does not have capacity to work with all the survey data managers to solicit and then input and manage all those data streams for stocks not scheduled for a management track assessment. With respect to discards, NEFSC is actively developing a discards module for our automated data processing system, which could provide discard updates automatically in the future. NEFSC and GARFO are also working on a shared catch accounting and monitoring system (CAMS), which we hope will not only improve consistency but also advance efficiency such that catch data, including discards, may be more readily available earlier in the year for data updates in the future. For 2020, however, NEFSC-derived discard estimates will only be available for stocks scheduled for management track assessments. Presumably, discard estimates may be available from GARFO's discard monitoring system, though, until CAMS is completed, as we all know, those estimates can be different than NEFSC estimates.