

**MAFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting**  
**May 23-24, 2012**  
**Baltimore, MD**

**Terms of Reference**

**A. MSB Special Terms of Reference**

Using information provided by May 9, 2012, the SSC will provide a written report that:

- 1) Reviews the longfin squid and Illex squid multiyear ABC recommendation set at the May 2011 SSC meeting to determine if any changes are necessary for 2013 based on the current best available science. If changes are deemed necessary, then the generic terms of reference would be followed<sup>1</sup>.
- 2) Reaffirms the SSC's 2012 butterfish ABC recommendation with the justification requirements specified in MSB Framework 6<sup>2</sup>.

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> The SSC specified in May 2011 that it wanted to do this review as a condition of providing multi-year advice for the squids.

<sup>2</sup> In cases where OFL or OFL proxies are not specified, Framework 6 requires the SSC to certify that any ABC increases would be unlikely to result in overfishing. This was inferred in the May 2012 SSC report but Framework 6 would require an explicit statement. Without Framework 6 the Council may not increase ABCs in the absence of an OFL or OFL proxy.

The SSC's report shall be provided to Council staff within 10 working days following the SSC meeting.

## **B. Butterfish Cap Terms of Reference**

### Background

Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan implemented a butterfish mortality cap on the longfin squid (*Loligo*) fishery in order to rebuild the butterfish stock. The longfin squid fishery has recently accounted for most butterfish mortality given the elimination of a large-scale directed butterfish fishery. The original plan was to base the cap on a rebuilding F ( $F = 0.1$ ) applied to the most recent butterfish biomass estimate and to have the SSC review the operation of the cap “to assure the rebuilding of the butterfish stock.” Given the findings of the most recent assessment, there is currently no butterfish biomass estimate and no rebuilding target. As such, so it is not possible for the SSC to comment on how the cap may be facilitating butterfish rebuilding. However, a review of the methodology to estimate the cap is appropriate.

### Terms of Reference

Using information provided by May 9, 2012, the SSC will provide a written report that:

1. Reviews the implementation of the butterfish cap to determine if it is controlling fishing mortality.
2. Provides recommendations for improving the estimation methodology, as appropriate.

The SSC’s report shall be provided to Council staff within 10 working days following the SSC meeting.

### **C. Generic Terms of Reference**

Using information provided by May 9, 2012, the SSC will provide a written report that identifies the following for the upcoming fishing year(s):

- 1) The materials considered in reaching its recommendations;
- 2) The level (1-4) that the SSC deems most appropriate for the information content of the most recent stock assessment, based on criteria listed in the Omnibus Amendment;
- 3) If possible, the level of catch (in weight) associated with the overfishing limit (OFL) based on the maximum fishing mortality rate threshold or, if appropriate, an OFL proxy;
- 4) The level of catch (in weight) associated with the acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the stock. The ABC will be selected based on the overfishing definition contained in the FMP and will reflect the level of scientific uncertainty inherent in the stock assessment such that the recommended ABC is less than or equal to the overfishing limit consistent with the Council's risk policy described in the Omnibus Amendment, the Act, and the National Standard 1 Guidelines to the Act;
- 5) Specify the number of fishing years for which the OFL and/or ABC specification applies and, if possible, identify interim metrics which can be examined to determine if multi-year specifications need adjustment prior to their expiration;
- 6) If possible, the probability of overfishing associated with the OFL and ABC catch level recommendations;
- 7) The most significant sources of scientific uncertainty associated with determination of OFL and ABC;
- 8) Ecosystem considerations accounted for in the stock assessment, and any additional ecosystem considerations that the SSC took into account in selecting the ABC, including the basis for those additional considerations;
- 9) List high priority research or monitoring recommendations that would reduce the scientific uncertainty in the ABC recommendation; and
- 10) A certification that the recommendations provided by the SSC represent the best scientific information available.

The SSC recommendations shall be provided to Council staff within 10 working days following the SSC meeting.