

**Non-target Species Committee Meeting**  
**Girdwood, AK**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**May 31, 2005**

Committee members Dave Benson (chair), Lori Swanson, Julie Bonney, Paul Spencer, Eric Olson, Dave Wood, Janet Smoker, Karl Haflinger, and Whit Sheard attended. Michelle Ridgway was absent. Jane DiCosimo provided staff support. Andy Smoker and Tom Pearson attended for NMFS. Jon Warrenchuk and Ben Enticknap also attended. The meeting convened from approximately 2 - 6 pm on May 1, 2005. Agenda items included: (1) a review on the status of efforts by AFSC scientists to define sensitivity and vulnerability to identify which groundfish species could be so identified and (2) a review on the draft Bering Sea rockfish case study.

Paul Spencer reviewed a draft spreadsheet that listed life history parameters and available data for four BSAI rockfish which will be used to identify which rockfish species are sensitive. That information will be reviewed further by AFSC scientists in the near future to aid in the development of the rockfish discussion paper; however the timeline for the determination by AFSC of sensitive species was unknown. Staff noted that that such information is needed prior to the completion of the paper, which is scheduled for review in August and presentation to the Council in October.

Jane DiCosimo briefed the committee on its two charges by the Council: (1) recommend a structure for the development of a discussion paper on target and non-target rockfish and (2) develop alternatives for revising management of non-target groundfish species. She reviewed several proposed actions to revise management of the "other species" category that are scheduled for final action in 2005 and 2006, which address item (2).

In its March 2005 discussion on the content and structure of the rockfish discussion paper, the committee recommended that staff apply Bering Sea rockfish to Alternative 4b as a case study to determine whether it could be expanded to include all rockfish and serve as a template for the paper. Ms. DiCosimo briefed the committee on the structure of the draft case study, noting that, due to time constraints, it was limited to BS northern rockfish, which she recognized as only a minor component of the BS rockfish assemblage. She identified some possible changes to the language of Alternative 4b that may better match the expected final revised guidelines for National Standard 1.

The committee discussed the merits of using Alternative 4b for structuring the paper compared with the draft outline that staff submitted to the Council in February 2005 that was prepared in case there was no additional guidance on the discussion paper. Staff noted that the same information would be provided using either as a model for the paper. The committee noted that using Alternative 4b provided a good format for conveying a lot of complicated, technical information on rockfish life history and research needs by species. The committee concluded that Alternative 4b should be used as the template for the paper because it is designed to result in an action by the Council.

The committee provided additional guidance for the development of the paper. The committee recognized that including all North Pacific rockfish in the discussion paper, while recommended, would be a challenge to complete by its next meeting, given other staff tasking. Therefore, it recommended that the paper include GOA and BSAI Pacific Ocean perch, northern rockfish, rougheye rockfish, and dusky rockfish (including issues related to assemblage management) as the highest priority. Staff should include the remaining species if time permits. The paper could discuss general issues up front and then again under each species section. The paper could include a spreadsheet noting where information is available for each rockfish species and a spreadsheet of ongoing rockfish research. The paper could include the abstracts of papers and posters to be presented at the Lowell Wakefield symposium on North Pacific Rockfishes that is scheduled for September 13-15, 2005.

The committee revised the language of Alternative 4b for rockfish as follows. The Step 1 and Step 3 options were deleted because there are no non-specified rockfish species<sup>1</sup>. Concern that core stocks could be identified as sensitive, which may lead to additional management measures, led the committee to strike a limitation under Step 2 and Step 3.

Alternative 4(b). Revise the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMPs to:

Part 1. Identify a *policy* to outline a *process* based on scientific *criteria* to determine core stock or assemblage management

Step 1. Separate species that are currently in the target and non-target category into:

- (a) Core stocks, if there is an intent by the commercial fishery to catch and market it or if sufficient information exists to set species-specific status determination criteria and the stock is considered sensitive or important (see draft NS 1 guidelines); (OFL, ABC, and TAC would be set for each species)
- (b) Stock assemblages for all remaining single species and all species assemblages with no fishery intent to catch or market it but that are caught by the fishery; (OFL, ABC, and TAC would be set for each assemblage)
- (c) Non-specified species for all remaining species or assemblages that are not caught in the fishery and remove them from the FMP

~~Option. Revise the forage fish category to include species from the current target and revised non-specified species categories, as appropriate~~

Step 2. Characterize species ~~in stock assemblage group~~ as:

- (a) sensitive
- (b) non-sensitive

Step 3. Manage:

- ~~(a) Core stocks and stock assemblages under status quo management;~~
- ~~(b) Species within stock assemblages: protecting them from negative fishing effects of target fisheries:~~
  - (1) sensitive species: **using** protection measures (e.g., **TACs, buffers between OFLs and ABCs, buffers between ABCs and TACs**, maximum retainable allowances, closed areas, seasonal apportionments, etc.);
  - (2) non-sensitive species: ~~monitor only (details to be decided)~~ **using more limited suite of measures (e.g., TACs, buffers between OFLs and ABCs, buffers between ABCs and TACs, maximum retainable allowances, closed areas, seasonal apportionments, etc.)**
- ~~(c) Non-specified species: monitor only~~

Part 2. Identify a *policy* to outline a *process* based on scientific *criteria* to determine when sufficient data are available to move species between the core stock and stock assemblage categories (*yet to be drafted subject of future ad hoc group meetings*)

The committee further recommended that the following outline of issues should be included in the discussion paper using the Alternative 4b template.

- 1) Description of current management practices and associated practical difficulties
  - a) Bycatch and discards (e.g., northern rockfish)
  - b) Management of species at the end of their range (BS slope)
  - c) Management of small quotas
- 2) Management actions taken to improve rockfish management, and management initiatives under development
  - a) Change in rockfish MRA ratios (white paper from Sue Salvesson and Andy Smoker)
  - b) Movement to break species assemblages into component species for conservation and management purposes (however, can lead to practical difficulties with small quotas)
  - c) Ongoing management initiatives (GOA rockfish pilot project and GOA groundfish rationalization, HAPC management, full retention of shortraker and rougheye rockfishes, Plan Team

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<sup>1</sup> After the meeting, staff noted that Step 1(c) also could be deleted.

recommendations to remove dark, black, and blue rockfishes from the BSAI FMP and dark rockfish from the GOA FMP).

- 3) Criticisms of rockfish management
  - a) Based upon west coast experience, F40 policies may not be sufficiently conservative (Goodman report)
  - b) The very principle of quota management is not sufficiently conservative because it does not recognize demographic, spatial, and temporal differences in spawner productivity (Berkeley's 2004 papers). What are required, Berkeley says, are protected areas.
- 4) Responses to criticisms of current management
  - a) Analyses assessing stock productivity for Alaska rockfish (papers by Dorn, Ianelli; Thompson's response to the Goodman report, Spencer's analysis of BSAI POP stock productivity presented to the SSC and plan team)
  - b) Refugia management would require information on dispersal in the early life-history phase, and any potential movements as adults, in order to make informative decisions regarding the size and location of closed areas.
- 5) Local depletion studies
- 6) Summary of current data on rockfish population biology
  - a) genetics/stock structure/species ID (could update information on Tony Gharrett's work)
  - b) early life history (Give and update of where Art Kendall is in his studies)
  - c) habitat issues/associations (Heifetz)
  - d) problems of surveying patchily distributed populations (Fujioka/Spencer/Hanselman)
  - e) inadequate survey coverage for some rockfish species
- 7) Data needs for improved science and management.

The committee tentatively identified August 31, 2005 in Anchorage as their next meeting date and location.