

MSC Subcommittee on Management Uncertainty  
Conference Call Summary from April 23, 2013

Attendees: Brandon, Linda, Mike, Tom, Jason, Jeff, Melissa, Pat

- The Assessment Science Committee held an Uncertainty Workshop in April
  - Received summaries by species of uncertainty in recent stock assessments
  - Identified common approaches across assessments toward developing guidance
  - Developed tables summarizing uncertainty by species groups/model types
- ASC developing guidance on assessment uncertainty in two parts:
  - 1) layman's guide describing sources of uncertainty and how to present them; for audience of new TC and SASC members, and managers
  - 2) guide for SASCs on characterizing uncertainty in a structured, but not cookbook format; grouping assessments by different levels of uncertainty for MSC to use in developing risk policy.
- The Management and Science subcommittee clarified ASC is working on scientific uncertainty in models as well as life history and stock complex issues
  - fisheries community often confuses scientific uncertainty (e.g., ageing error in the assessment model) and management uncertainty (e.g., quota/regulation implementation and monitoring; black sea bass vs. Northern shrimp)
- ASMFC does not manage by ACLs or AMs; at the MAFMC and SAFMC, a tiered approach and control rules mandate a risk policy related to scientific uncertainty, no mandate on what to do about management uncertainty
  - Is the amount of uncertainty introduced by a stock assessment sufficient to account for additional management uncertainty?
  - Many ASMFC species are recreational and those generally have more uncertainty, focus first on recreational species but address all species eventually
- Generic guidance vs. species specific guidance on an ad hoc basis?
  - Develop principles to help estimate uncertainty magnitude, but do not necessarily provide estimates
  - E.g., principle to describe how controlled each fishery is and therefore how impactful are the management measures; what the risk is of exceeding the reference point they are trying to achieve?
  - If the species is less than half controlled, consider more management precautions. The buffer should be a negotiated process.
  - Categorize the managed species, by commercial, recreational or both, then review how well managed they are
- Format - Develop management guidance as part of the ASC guidance, or separately?
  - They should go hand in hand; describe the overarching principles then show how they apply to each stock; ASC discussed developing a decision tree with indicators, that would be more applicable in the management sense

- Combine with the ASC guidance by adding columns to the ASC table such as recreational vs. commercial harvest or level of PSE to categorize as more or less certain
- Outline the process for providing guidance to each species Board, or directly with the completion of each stock assessment
  - 1) by MSC specifically interpreting management uncertainty for each species Board
  - 2) or a generic recipe to provide guidance for the managers' broader discussions and ensure uncertainty is considered, especially for species with weak management
  - the Boards are in a better spot to judge the unique characteristics of the fisheries, MSC can just provide the structure for their discussion
- Define the Technical Committees' roles for evaluating uncertainty as well
  - E.g., with fluke, scup, black sea bass, and other Boards ask their monitoring committee or TC for guidance on management uncertainty
  - TCs could use the MSC guidelines and table to focus on species they deal with, and also compare uncertainty characterization approaches with species close by
- Development of uncertainty table for general guidance document
  - Table should go species by species to cover different types of management uncertainty and then transfer to a more general guidance document
  - The MSC subcommittee will fill in those principles and additional management uncertainty columns for the species with which they are familiar
  - Also show if each species has a quota, or managed by F, for the recreational and commercial sectors
  - Describe uncertainty for all ASMFC species, including jointly managed species; ASMFC having a policy will protect the states interests instead of assuming the Council's approach will do so
- Timeline
  - The full MSC should discuss how to implement the subcommittee's principles; the subcommittee could then meet afterwards to polish up the guidance for reporting back to MSC, and possibly the Policy Board for consideration, at the Annual Meeting in October, consistent with ASC's timeline