

Update on Scientific Coordination Subcommittee Activity

May 8, 2025

Update for the Gulf SSC



8th SCS Workshop
August 2024, NEFMC hosted

Theme: Applying ABC Control Rules in a Changing Environment

Goal: Provide actionable guidance on how to best support Councils in the management of fisheries, specifically the application of ABC control rules, in a changing environment.

SCS8 Final Report Highlights

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

Challenges	Recommendations
Data limitations	Basic research: funding and planning to address data limitations.
Regional differences	Consistent availability: identify differences in data and information available by region; commit to making resources available across the nation.
Stock assessment performance	Analytical advances: integrate climate impacts into stock assessments and in the definition of reference points.
Capacity limitations	Expand collaborations: Expand data collection and collaboration with partners, integrate local ecological knowledge.
Ad hoc uptake	Strategic guidance: Define opportunities and provide guidance for on-ramping ecosystem information into the decision-making process.

SCS8 Final Report Highlights

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

Challenges	Recommendations
Data Limitations	Address information gaps: identify and fill data gaps; address constraint of data confidentiality issues.
Regional differences	Engage and formalize use of social science: Respond to public testimony, foster relationships and trust; use LEK, cooperative research and industry input.
Capacity limitations	More coordination: Focus the available staff resources; define how SSCs can contribute; use cooperative research.
Ad hoc uptake	Strategic guidance: Define on-ramps for social science; consider alignment of scales of data, timing of science and decisions, and roles; adapt decision making process to incorporate social science.

SCS8 Final Report Highlights

Sub-theme 3: Adaptation of reference points, control rules, and rebuilding plans in a changing environment

Challenges	Recommendations
Data limits	Consistent availability: funding and planning is needed to address data limitations and the need for more mechanistic studies.
Inertia in science and management process	Analytical advances: integrate climate impacts into assessment and biological reference points, adapt risk tables and policies to incorporate climate risk.
ABC control rule performance	Performance evaluation: simulation testing robustness in a changing environment with management strategy evaluation or retrospective analyses.
System rigidity	Proactive actions: need address challenges and barriers to adaptation; examine where regulatory actions are required to allow future flexibility (e.g., phase-in, carryover); build flexibility into FMPs.

Regional Actions - Gulf



Action Item Developed at SCS8	Follow-up
<p>1) Gulf and SA SSCs jointly identifying consistent approaches for evaluating uncertainty in MSY estimates, when to use proxies for reference points, and recruitment timeframes for projections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Working with SEFSC to standardize projections methods● SSCs recommended joint workgroup to work on MSY estimation versus using proxies<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Gulf Council approved this joint workgroup, waiting on SAFMC feedback
<p>2) Planning MSE of the Gulf Council's ABC control rule, exploring carryover and phase-in approaches, and MSY estimation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● MSE for Tier 1 has been requested from the SEFSC; timeline for delivery has not been finalized.● Discussions about moving forward with carryover and phase-in have come up at SSC and Council, but issue has not been brought forward again.
<p>3) Expand use of Fishermen Feedback tool, and explore updated modeling approaches as feasible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Approval re: Paperwork Reduction Act has been received for use of the tool● Staff considering new ways to use the tool all the time● SSC members with interest are encouraged to reach out about Fishermen Feedback; collaboration welcome.

Regional Actions - Other Councils



- Exploring use of dynamic reference points and control rules
- Revising the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review process to increase assessment timeliness and throughput, leading to more flexibility.
- SSC Social and Economic panel discussing how to improve data in risk ratings index.



New England
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- Develop science-manager work group on reference points.
 - Need more consistency in how reference points are set and revised; tangible testing of different approaches.
 - Build off the Jan 2024 reference point workshop and other research/stock structure workshops.
- Meeting of SSC, NEFSC/SSB, PDTs on social science
 - Build off the May 2024 workshop with SSB and SSC; improve communication and integration of social science information.
 - Formal social science work group may be a next step.

Regional Actions - Other Councils



- Exploring how to move towards use of assessment updates that can be more frequent and responsive than benchmark assessments.
- Piloting how to use risk tables for all benchmark assessments conducted during the 2025-2026 stock assessment cycle.



- Planning workshop with SSC and NEFSC on improving engagement and support on stock assessments, climate and social science issues.
- Planning MSE to test the robustness of different control rules and management strategies to changing climate conditions and data uncertainties.



- Develop a Fishery Ecosystem Plan and Risk Assessment strategy that incorporates social science data and information.
- Continuing meetings with fishermen to help improve the very limited data on effort and landings.

Regional Actions - Other Councils



- Developing management approaches and scenario planning appropriate for data-limited, small-scale, and or multispecies fisheries.
- Ongoing review of ACL framework (including P* and SEEM working group processes).
- Exploring ways to better integrate socioeconomic information into SSC recommendations.
- Implementing a climate work plan: 1) SSC workshop on control rules: flexibility of current tier system vs what requires FMP amendments to modify, 2) testing control rules, and 3) goals and objectives for analysis of alternative control rules.



SCS9 Planning

- To be hosted by Gulf Council in 2027
- Primary Theme Idea: Strategies for Robust and Efficient Fisheries Management
 - Resource availability for data collection, stock assessments, and management analyses is dynamic. SSCs will need to respond proactively to change to best serve Council needs for scientific advice. Given this, how do we adapt, bring in new data, and improve timeliness of advice provision?
 - Social, economic, citizen science
 - Examine disconnects between science and fishery dynamics, and explore how to resolve those disconnects to improve applicability of science to management
- CCC expected to discuss/approve theme in May 2025

SSC task: Input on SCS9 theme?