

MRIP Transition Team: Atlantic and Gulf Subgroup

FINAL Summary

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Bagwill, Bray, Chu, Curtis, Didden, Errigo, Kelly, Kerns, Knowlton, Porch, Rago, Strelcheck, Tromble, Turner, Van Voorhees, Wright

Agenda Topics

- 1. What are the necessary steps in the transition process, and how should they be carried out in sequence?**
- 2. What are the constraints on our timeline? Specifically, what is the minimum time needed for each step in the process?**
- 3. At what points in time can we evaluate progress and make decisions to keep or extend a planned timeline for one or more steps of the process?**
- 4. What are the pros and cons of taking an ‘aggressive’ approach versus a ‘play it safe’ approach?**

Due to time constraints, the group was only able to cover Agenda Topics 1 and 2. Topics 3 and 4 will be covered in detail at the next meeting Friday, December 12, 2014.

Agenda Topic 1

The necessary steps in the general process have been outlined in a separate document. The general transition steps are included for reference and are as follows:

1. Benchmarking to Evaluate Differences
2. Further Experiments
3. Calibration
 - Peer review of the calibration method
4. Revising the Time Series
5. Incorporation Into Stock Assessments
6. Incorporation Into Economic Assessments
7. Monitoring of Catch Relative to ACLs
8. Incorporation Into Allocation Decisions
9. Full Implementation

Although the team agrees that these are necessary steps, there was not a clear consensus of the specific order or number of steps—specifically among steps 5-8. Additional steps suggested were to add Communications and Outreach (throughout entire process), as well as an external peer review of the calibration method to the general transition plan (after Step 3). Development of a calibration model has already started. It was agreed that Councils and Commissions need to be informed early in the process in order to fully prepare for potential allocation decisions; however, it is not within the purview of the Transition Team (TT) to recommend that the Councils take action. The TT can and should flag events in the timeline that could affect

outcomes pertinent to the management process. This will need to be addressed in future discussions. The transition process should be a vehicle for justifying the timing of utilizing new methods and when new method estimates would constitute best available data for monitoring of catch relative to an ACL; such as when the time series of catch estimates has been modified and incorporated into stock assessments.

Agenda Topic 2

The group agreed that the number of years for benchmarking the new effort survey is a key decision. Several members believe that one year may not be sufficient to confidently develop a calibration model. At least one year of side-by-side comparisons is needed to measure differences across all states and two-month waves, however this may not be optimal or sufficient to produce an accurate calibration model for revising the time series of catch statistics. This topic will be discussed in more depth at the next call, weighing the pros and cons of all options. We will need to reach consensus on timelines to move forward with transition planning and to allow for consistent messaging across regions and partners. Because the TT was tasked with determining a plan for the new effort survey from NMFS leadership, it will be important to have that consensus for our recommendation.

All agreed that any further experiments necessary to resolve or clarify design issues, biases; et cetera could be conducted during the benchmarking process. Information gathered from these studies may be necessary for developing an appropriate calibration model and explaining the differences between the FES and the CHTS estimates.

Identified Time Constraints

1. Regardless of the number of years of side-by-side testing, final revised estimates will not be available until the following spring (mid-April).
 - The calibration model can still be developed prior to this time and parallel with benchmarking.
2. The external peer review of the calibration model will take an additional 2-3 months to complete (finish June-July).
 - This will occur separate of a data review workshop and address only the model itself, not the application. The application of the calibration model will be reviewed at one or more data review workshops conducted for planned stock assessments (updates or benchmarks). Both reviews could occur sequentially within the 2-3 month timeframe and not cause a significant delay.
 - Only after the model has been accepted can the calibration be applied to revise the time series of catch statistics (if approved in July, could have revised catch statistics as early as September).
3. Developing the calibration model could prove to be more challenging with the various complexities of coverage differences (e.g. decreased landline households), response rates

declining in phone surveys, measurement error in the proportion of households reporting fishing, et cetera.

- This could impact the timeline for development of the model by mid-April.
- There will be a future call with statistical consultants to update the group on these issues once more is known.

At the earliest, revised catch statistics would be ready for use in stock assessments by September of the following year of initial side-by-side testing. The stock assessment members of the TT will need to provide a proposed approach for incorporating the new catch statistics. It was previously discussed to alter the schedule for key recreational stocks to ensure that all were updated as quickly as possible; however some members expressed concern that benchmark assessments be necessary and suggested that only updating a few key species as case studies may be more appropriate. It was also raised that the timeline and workload will need to account for both state and federally managed species.

The group will come back to the issue of identifying key stocks that have a large recreational landings component; the extent of changes may impact whether an update or benchmark assessment is appropriate for integrating updated recreational time series.

General within-year timeline – which year these occur will depend on future evaluation of the side-by-side calibration process.

April 201X – side-by-side final results available (2016 at the earliest)

May 201X – finalize calibration

June-July 201X – external review of the calibration model and data review

September 201X – have revised catch statistics

September 201X – November (although possibly into the following year) – conduct stock assessments with new data and then integrate new assessment results into the management process.

Note: The group will develop further recommendations regarding timing and sequencing on future calls.

Next Steps

1. Key foci of the group should be the timing of calibration work and how the process of incorporating new data into assessments should proceed (updates versus benchmarks). For example: how many stocks would be feasible to do at one time; what the **ideal** timing would be, taking into account the time constraints to the process; and the priority of key stocks in their regions.
2. The group will next meet Friday, December 12, 2014 at 11am EST.