

Report to the UM Independent System for Peer Reviews (CIE).

Submitted by R. Mohn for chairing SARC 31, June, 2000

Overview:

SARC 31 reviewed 4 stocks or stock complexes: scup, goosefish, quahog and summer flounder. The goosefish and summer flounder resources are wide ranging and the assessments (especially summer flounder) had to integrate a large number of abundance indices. Quahogs were assessed with traditional and new biomass dynamics models. Although the agenda did not seem as full as SARC 30, all the available time was spent on review and document production. There was not sufficient time to investigate a number of scientific and procedural issues which came up during the meeting.

Activities:

Upon receipt, the various assessments and related documents were read, summarized and specific questions compiled. Some pre-meeting time was also spent reviewing the agenda and becoming more familiar with the SARC process and related documentation. The meeting was chaired and first drafts compiled for each stock. In a couple cases, final results were not available until after the SARC. Upon return to Halifax, an Advisory Draft was compiled and circulated to presenters and SARC Leaders. Their comments were in turn compiled and integrated into the draft which was sent to the entire committee for comment. The third draft was completed and forwarded to the SAW chair. The glossary, which accompanies the Advisory, was also updated.

Review related observations:

Chairing the meeting itself was not too difficult. By and large, the Committee knew what was to be done and how to do it. As I had chaired the previous SARC, I was better

prepared and had fairly good ideas of what to expect. However, the single most important improvement over SARC 30 was having a second CIE person to call upon. Dr. Basson acted as a SARC Leader for scup, assisted with analysis of scup data during the meeting, contributed to the discussion of all stocks, and reviewed the entire Advisory draft post-meeting. My work was easier, and the final result in better shape due to her participation. In other words she provided the technical expertise that I had requested from SARC 30 as well as valuable, independent comments.

Although the agenda was not as full as SARC 30, time ran out on Friday. The main problem was scup, which suffers from discarding rates which are not well known but of such magnitude that most fisheries models could not be used. The committee spent a fair bit of time trying to think of ways around shortcomings of the data. A few ideas were given to the authors, they would do some analysis, come back, more review, suggestions etc. This situation presents the related questions of the amount of technical review which should be undertaken by a SARC and the amount of work to be initiated during the SARC. I did not have any explicit guidelines, indeed it may be impossible to delineate any, so we kept trying to improve the assessment at the cost of finishing up with a less complete analysis. The other 3 stocks went smoothly.

Again thanks to Steve Muraski and his staff who had to carry most of the technical review and help with technology transfer. Similarly the SAW staff, Terry Smith and Pie Smith, made every effort to expedite things for me.

In the SARC 30 report I mentioned that a couple of scientific questions, which were not directly related to the review process were brought forward. We did not have time to discuss them and I felt that I did not have the mandate to add items to the agenda. Similarly at SARC 31, one of the panel members produced a 2 page discussion on the topic on improvements to data collection and funding. An important topic of general interest, though not directly concerned with the review process. Again, I did not allow it to be tabled.

The major problem in producing an Advisory Document draft remains the production and review of its figures. Perhaps some technical solution may be possible, like a web page or local network, which could provide an environment for real time editing and quick dissemination.

Project administration related observations: (semi repeats from previous reports)

As previously mentioned, there is a need for some sort of checklist or template to help the reviewers/chairs avoid omissions and to establish a degree of comparability among reviews. Perhaps a couple of the better, under any criteria, reports that you have received over the last 2 years could be used to develop a prototype report. Marinelle mentioned to me the need for more detailed guidance, so I gave her one of my earlier reviews, which I trust was not a breach of confidence. I still think that there is a general need for this sort of material and feedback would be constructive.

Note that 2 fewer days of consultation were charged than for SARC 30. This is the result of 4 instead of 5 stocks, the assessments (excepting scup) being less controversial, and finally, I had a better idea of what was to be done and how to do it. On the other fiscal hand, the \$30 per diem is insufficient for Cape Cod in the summer. For comparison, the US Federal rate is around \$40 and Canada's is over \$45.

STATEMENT OF TASK

Consulting Agreement between the University of Miami and Robert K. Mohn

May 22, 2000

General

The Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) is a formal, one-week long meeting of a group of stock assessment experts who serve as a peer-review panel for several tabled stock assessments. It is part of the overall Northeast Stock Assessment Workshop (SAW) process that also includes peer assessment development (SAW Working Groups), public presentations, and document publication within a cycle that lasts six months. The panel consists of some 12-15 assessment scientists which include 4 scientists from the NEFSC; a scientist from the Northeast Regional office, staff from the NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC with additional panelists from state fisheries agencies, academia (US and Canada), and other federal research institutions (US and Canada).

Designee will serve as chairman of the 31st SARC panel. The panel will convene at the NEFSC in Woods Hole the week of 26 June (June 26-30) and review assessments for Ocean quahog, Summer flounder, Goosefish (Monkfish), and Scup.

Specific

- (1) Prior to the meeting: become familiar with the working papers produced by the SAW Working Groups (total number not final; there will be at least one per stock);
- (2) During the meeting: Act as chairperson where duties include control of the meeting, coordination of presentations and discussion, control of document flow;
- (3) After the meeting: Facilitate the preparation and writing of a Draft Advisory Report and Consensus Summary Report by NMFS personnel. Panelists, NEFSC staff and the SAW Chairman will ensure that documents are made available to the SARC chair, revised according to the SARC Chair's directions, compiled, copied and distributed;
- (4) Review the final Draft Advisory Report and Consensus Summary Report.

The SAW Chairman and SAW Coordinator will assist the Chair prior to, during and after the meeting in ensuring that documents are distributed in a timely fashion. The SARC Chair will be solely responsible for the editorial content of the reports.

The Chair's duties will occupy a total of two weeks - several days prior to the meeting for document review; the week long meeting; and several days following the meeting to ensure that the final documents are consistent with the SARC's recommendations and advice.

Contact persons: Dr. Terrence P. Smith, NEFSC, Woods Hole, SAW Chairman, 508-495-2230
Mary Jane Smith, NEFSC, Woods Hole, SAW Coordinator, 508-495-2370

Signed _____

Robert K. Mohn

Date _____

BUDGET

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| 1. Salary (\$600 per day for 14 days) | \$8,400 |
| 2. Plane fare | \$500 |
| 3. Lodging (6 nights) | \$600 |
| 4. Meals (\$30 per diem for 7 days) | \$210 |
| 5. Car rental (\$50 for 7 days) | \$350 |