

Terms of Reference (TOR) for 2013 Data Collections Science Program Reviews

Objective

The objective for these reviews is to review and evaluate the Center's current scientific fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data as it relates to fishery stock assessments conducted pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Act:

- NOAA ship-based surveys
- Cooperative research surveys
- Logbook and observer data
- Data management and quality control

Reviewers will provide advice to the Center on the direction and quality of these data collection and management programs

Using as context, two-three or more typical and important stock assessments conducted by the Center, reviewers should address:

1. To what extent do fishery independent survey data quality, statistical precision, and timeliness issues impact overall assessment accuracy, precision and timeliness?
2. What are the major fishery independent survey successes and how should they be supported?
3. What are the major fishery independent survey limitations/weaknesses and how could they be resolved? Define potential improvements and priorities for recommended improvements.
4. To what extent do fishery dependent data quality, statistical precision, and timeliness issues impact overall assessment accuracy, precision and timeliness?
5. What are the major fishery dependent data sources successes and how should they be supported?
6. What are the major fishery dependent data limitations/weaknesses and how could they be resolved? Define potential improvements and priorities for recommended improvements.
7. What recommendations do you have for prioritizing fishery-independent and fishery-dependent data collection improvements?
8. To what extent are fishery independent and fishery dependent data readily accessible to Center stock assessment scientists and to various external researchers who may wish to replicate NMFS stock assessments?
9. Identify the highest priority needs for improving fishery dependent and fishery independent data. Define potential improvements.

Overarching Questions for Reviewers

- Relationship of current and planned fishery assessment data activities to Center fishery assessments mandates and requirements – is the Center doing the right things?
- Opportunities – are there opportunities that the Center should be pursuing in collecting and compiling fishery assessment data, including shared approaches with partners?
- Scientific/technical approach – are the Center's fishery data objectives adequate, and is the Center using the best suite of techniques and approaches to meet those objectives?
- Organization and priorities – is the Center's fishery data system properly organized to meet its mandates and is the allocation of resources among program appropriate?
- Scientific conduct – are the Center's fishery data programs being conducted properly (survey design, standardization, integrity, peer review, transparency, confidentiality, PII, etc.)?