

Joint Meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council & Scientific and Statistical Committee

Dewey Beach, Delaware

October 5, 2022



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MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Joint Meeting Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions
- Overview of 2023 SSC activities (B. Muffley, Council staff)
 - Review planned meeting topics, work group activities, and other SSC commitments
- Developing ecosystem information for science and management (S. Gaichas, Ecosystem Work Group Chair)
 - Update from SSC Ecosystem Work Group: review work group objectives and priorities, progress made to date, and future plans
 - Council feedback on work group plans and application to support management
- Providing economic advice for management application (G. DePiper, Economic Work Group Chair)
 - Research Set-Aside case study: lessons learned and areas for improvement
 - Areas of engagement of the Economic Work Group in 2023
- Future joint Council/SSC meetings

Role of SSC

- Primary scientific/technical advisory body to assist and provide the Council with science advice and guidance
- Primary role is to develop/review Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendations that prevent overfishing

- Other areas for input:

Fishery management plan development	Habitat
Bycatch, fishing practices	Socioeconomics
Stock status, rebuilding, control rules	Research priorities

- Recent areas of SSC engagement

Recreational fisheries management (HCR)	Habitat modeling and NRHA review
Ecosystem and EAFM development	Research Set-Aside Program review
Mackerel rebuilding alts, OFL CV	Recreational demand model review

Preliminary topics for 2023 SSC meetings

Meeting	Anticipated Topics									
March	Review/modify 2023 <i>Illex</i> ABC 2024 ABC review: Golden and Blueline Tilefish 2023 State of the Ecosystem report Update from SSC Ecosystem Work Group Summer Flounder management strategy evaluation Short-term forecasts of species distributions research Review potential updates to the OFL CV guidance document Update from Constant/Average ABC Work Group									
May	2024 ABC review: Surfclam and Ocean Quahog 2024 ABC review: Chub Mackerel and Butterfish Finalize process to provide constant/average ABC recommendations Introductory overview of research track assessment results: Bluefish, Spiny Dogfish, and Black Sea Bass									
July	Management track assessment results and OFL/OFL recommendations for: <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Longfin Squid</td> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Atlantic Mackerel</td> <td>Spiny Dogfish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Summer Flounder</td> <td>Scup</td> <td>Black Sea Bas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bluefish</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Longfin Squid	Atlantic Mackerel	Spiny Dogfish	Summer Flounder	Scup	Black Sea Bas	Bluefish		
Longfin Squid	Atlantic Mackerel	Spiny Dogfish								
Summer Flounder	Scup	Black Sea Bas								
Bluefish										
September	Offshore wind discussion Biennial review of 2020-2024 research priorities Update from the SSC Ecosystem Work Group EAFM risk assessment review and update									

Other SSC activities in 2023:

- 4 active SSC work groups – Ecosystem, Economic, ABC average, and OFL CV
- Stock assessment activities – peer reviews, RTA work groups, NRCC work groups/steering committees

Potential Areas of Discussion/Feedback

- Are there additional topics or areas of interest the Council would like the SSC to consider at any of the planned 2023 meeting?
- Are there specific areas the Council would like the SSC to offer advice and input that is currently not provided?
- Does the Council have any thoughts on the role or types of advice the SSC can provide regarding offshore wind development?
- Is there interest in having a Council member liaison to the SSC?

Developing ecosystem information for science and management

Report from the SSC Ecosystem Work Group

Sarah Gaichas, NEFSC and Work Group Chair

SSC Ecosystem Working Group

Objective: assist the Council in developing short term and long term objectives to advance the operational use of ecosystem information in management decisions

Outcomes for the Council:

- An OFL CV process that makes better use of ecosystem information in determining the ABC
- Evaluation of multiple ecosystem indicators and potential development of thresholds for use in a revised EAFM risk assessment and/or other Council processes
- Increased range of opportunities for relevant ecosystem information to be considered in management decision processes



Progress

Objective 1: Expanding and clarifying the ecosystem portion of the SSC OFL CV determination process (short term objective)

Simulation analyses evaluating impact of ecosystem indicators on stock productivity and assessment uncertainty (OFL CV) in progress

Objective 2: Developing prototype processes to provide multispecies and system level scientific advice appropriate for Council decision making, highlighting tradeoffs linking directly to economic and social outcomes (long term objective)

Initial indicators and analyses presented evaluating ecosystem overfishing and ecosystem performance given environmental conditions

Objective 3: Collaborating with relevant working groups in developing the stock-specific Ecosystem and Socio-economic Profiles (ESP) process to specify stock-specific Ecosystem ToRs (moderate-term objective)

Ecosystem socioeconomic profiles in progress for several MAFMC stocks, and multiple SSC members involved in Research Track working groups

Feedback: Ecosystem overfishing

How might the Council use indicators of Ecosystem overfishing?

What information would be most useful in decision making?

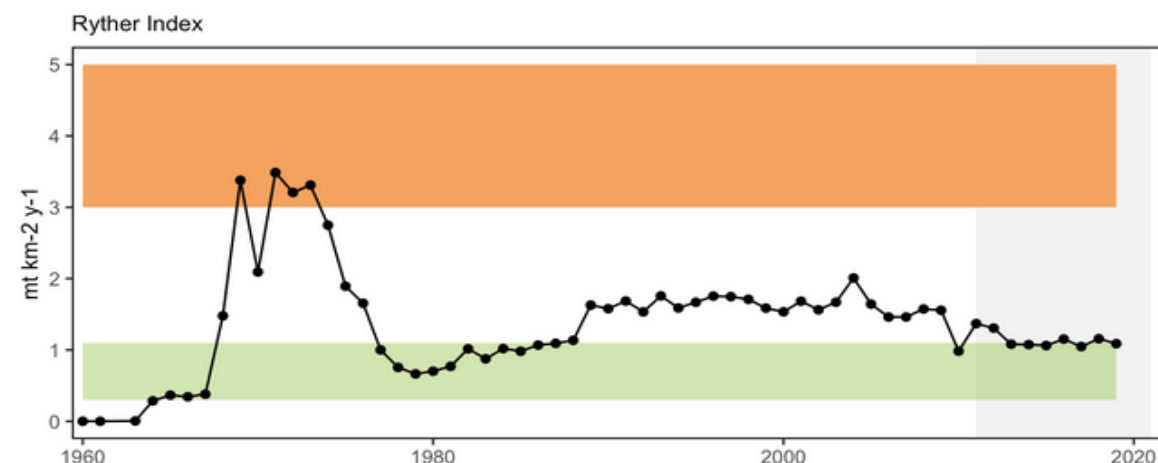
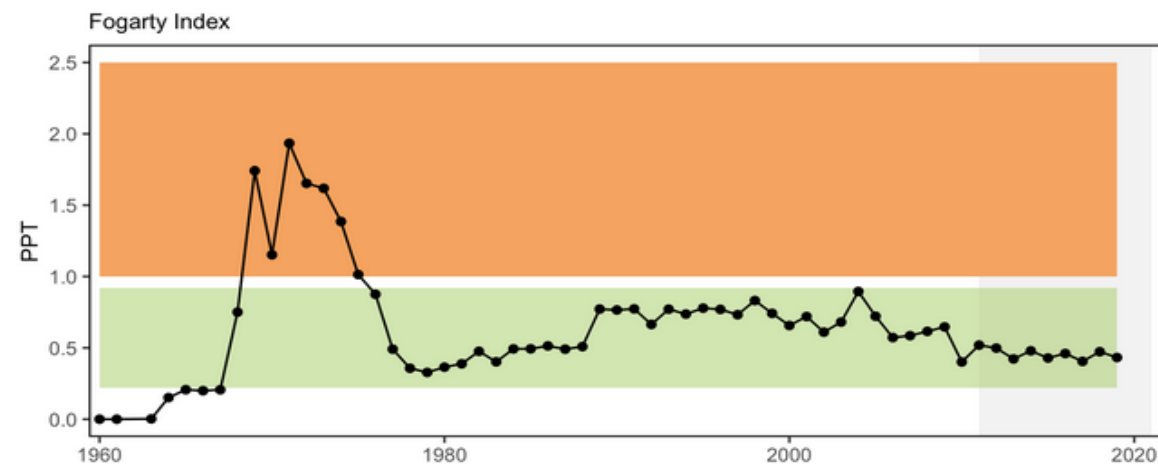
SSC discussion:

- Define based on regional ecosystem productivity
- Thresholds define a "safe operating space"
 - Define the bounds where fishing causes poor system performance
 - Identify tradeoffs across species within the safe zone
- Provide advice on options to correct ecosystem overfishing
- Use social benefits to measure outcomes

Figure key:

Orange background = Tipping point overfishing threshold, Link and Watson 2019

Green background = Optimal range, Link and Watson 2019



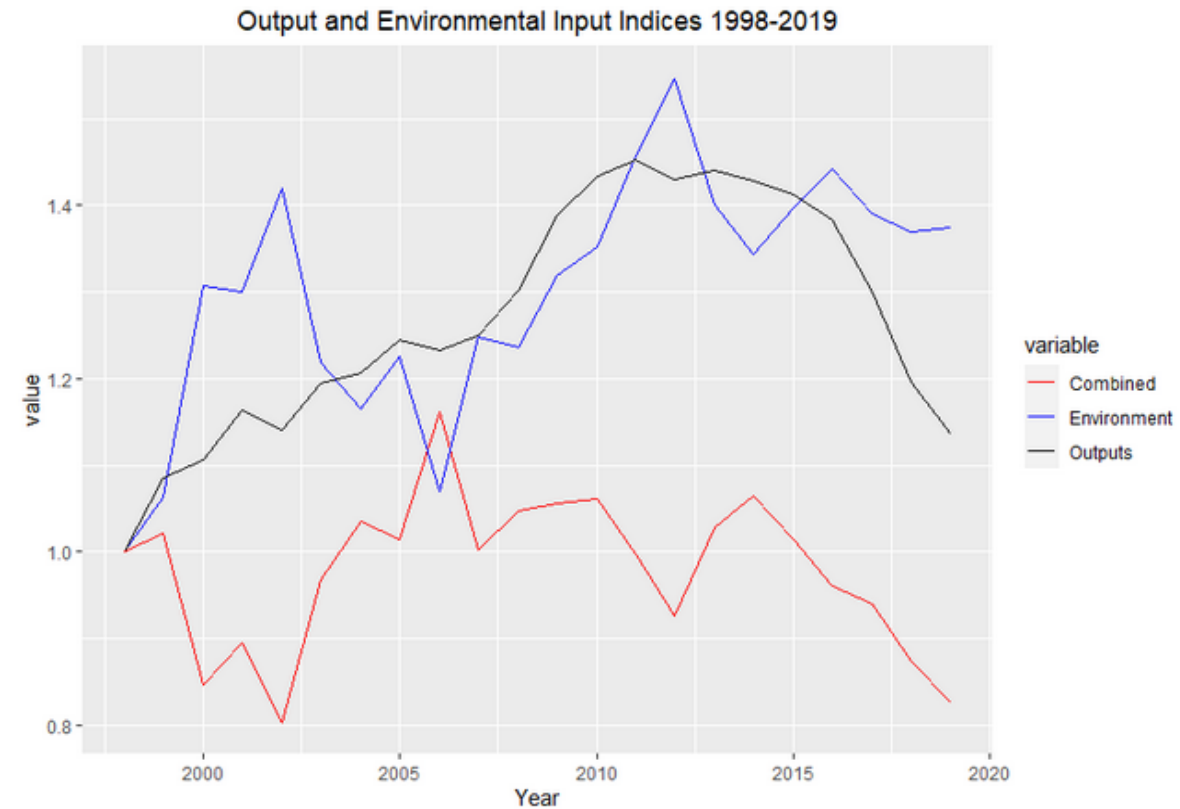
Feedback: Index Numbers

How might the Council use an Index Numbers approach?

What information would be most useful in decision making?

SSC discussion:

- Integrates separate indicators into overall performance indicator
 - Outputs linked to current management objectives
 - Identify outputs of interest with the Council
 - Identify linked environmental inputs
- Could develop models for separate objectives
 - Seafood production
 - Recreational opportunities

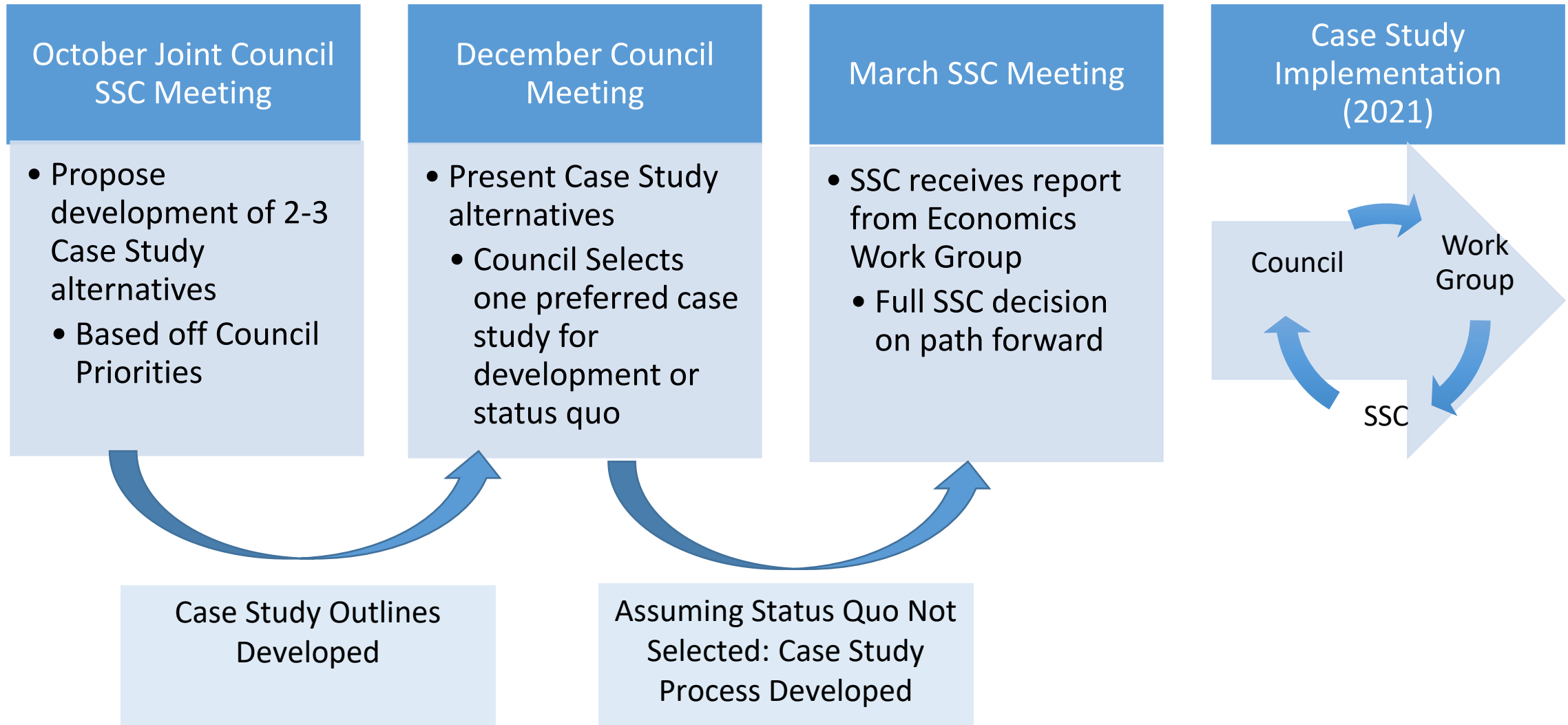


Providing economic advice for management application

Report from the SSC Economic Work Group

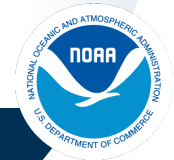
Geret DePiper, NEFSC and Work Group Chair

MAFMC SSC Economic Work Group Proposal



Case Study Touch Points

- Economic Work Group worked closely with Council members and Staff
 - Actively participated in Committee Meetings
 - Helped plan Research Set Aside Workshops
 - 2 formal updates to Council
 - Informal updates through RSC & SSC reports



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Between Dec. 2020 & June 2022

- 10 formal meetings
- 6 written reports/memoranda
 - Decision tree
 - Trade-off discussion
- 4 SSC updates
- Informal meetings with Committee Leadership, Regional Office, State, others associated with original RSA program



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SSC Economic Contributions since Sept. '21

- Research Set Aside (Primary Focus)
- Summer Flounder Management Strategy Evaluation
- Recreational Harvest Control Rule SSC review
- Recreational Models SSC Review



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More Organic Workflow anticipated

- Driven by expertise and interest
 - Additional Research Set Aside projects likely
 - Ecosystem Working Group support
 - Annual Recreational Specifications
 - Recreational Harvest Control Rule
 - 2023 Council Priorities
- Coordinated through Economic Work Group



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Moving forward...

- Can we improve the process?
 - Frequency and types of communication
 - Case study worked primarily through Council Staff and Committee
 - Appropriate feedback opportunities?



Future joint Council-SSC meetings?

- Are these meetings valuable and informative?
- Are they accomplishing the goal(s) of discussing/addressing relevant issues and fostering greater dialogue/relationships between groups?
- Opportunities to modify and improve?
 - Overall meeting structure or approaches
 - Something more engaging; part of an SSC meeting; SSC presentations on specific topics (e.g., stock assessment methods, control rules)
 - Hold less frequently or less prescribed (e.g., every other year or only when pressing issues arise)
 - Allow for more topic development
 - Dedicate more time on agenda
 - Encourage more participation (particularly in person)