

8th National Workshop of the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee

Dr. Lisa Kerr, Chair of SCS8 Committee and NEFMC SSC

NEFMC Meeting
December 3, 2024



SCS8 Workshop: Applying ABC Control Rules in a Changing Environment

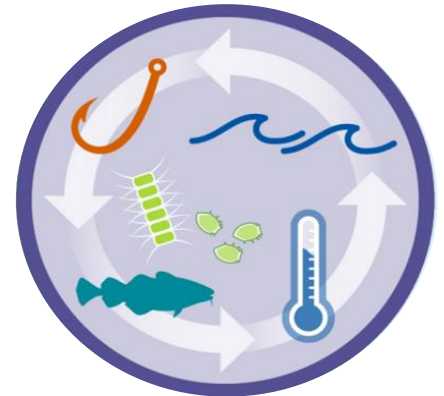


Hosted by New England Fishery Management Council in
Boston, MA (August 26-28, 2024)

SCS8 Workshop: 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.

Motivation: SSCs have been challenged in applying ABC control rules in a manner that reliably achieves management goals given the degree of ecosystem change and scientific uncertainty that Council regions are experiencing.



Participants

- Representatives from 8 Fishery Management Councils SSC's and staff
- NOAA representatives
- Keynote speakers
- Facilitated by Urban Harbors Institute, UMass Boston



Meeting Opener

Janet Coit

Assistant Administrator
NOAA Fisheries

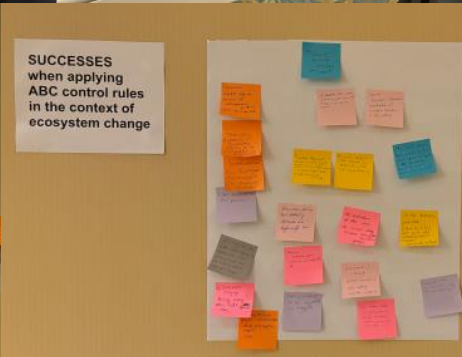


Topics We Covered

- **Context setting:** Current approaches to defining ABC control rules and challenges in their application
- **Sub-Theme I:** Advances in ecosystem science and assessment to inform ABC control rules in a dynamic environment
- **Sub-Theme II:** Application of social science to achieve management goals under dynamic conditions
- **Sub-Theme III:** Adaptation of reference points, control rules, and rebuilding plans to changing environment
- **Closing:** Synthesis, actionable outcomes, next steps

Context Setting

- Reviewed ABC control rules used across Councils
 - Tiered control rules are used across most regions.
 - Empirical approaches (index or catch) used in data-limited & plan B scenarios.
 - Some Councils have one (tiered) control rule for all stocks, others are FMP-specific.
 - Recent and ongoing revisions to ABC control rules underway by some Councils.
- Overviewed challenges and successes in applying ABC control rules.



Challenges with ABC Control Rules

Challenges

Data Limitations

Stock Assessment
Performance

ABC Control Rule
Performance

System Rigidity

Recommendations

Basic research

Analytical advances

Performance
evaluation

Proactive actions

- Funding and planning to address data limitations
- More mechanistic studies

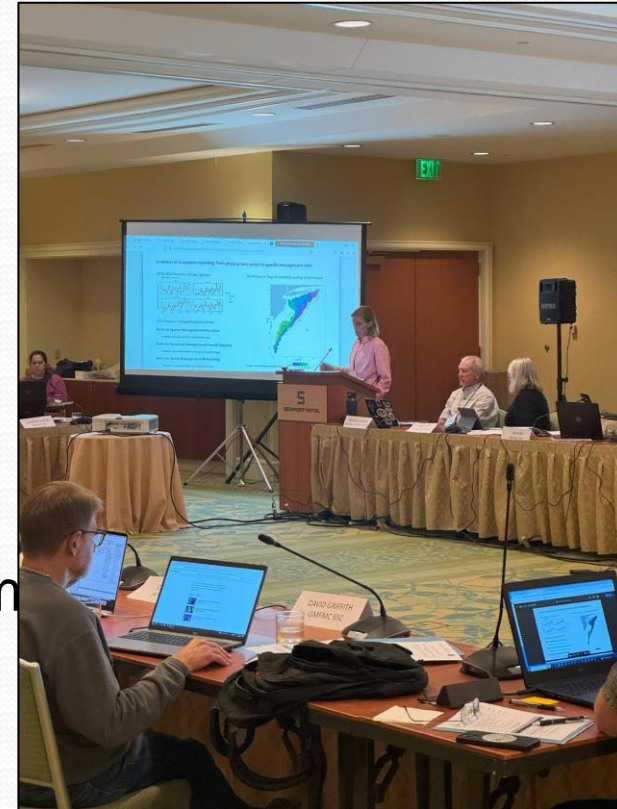
- Integrate climate impacts into assessment and reference points

- Simulation testing (MSE)
- Retrospective analyses

- Regulatory actions required to allow future flexibility (phase-in, carryover)
- Build flexibility into FMPs.

I. Advances in Ecosystem Science and Assessment

- Initiatives and products
 - Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative
 - Ecosystem Status Reports
 - Ecosystem and Socioeconomic Profiles
 - Fisheries Ecosystem Plans
 - Climate Chapter in SAFE Report
- Modeling platforms that can use ecosystem/climate info (e.g. WHAM, FIMs)
- Use of risk tables to characterize ecosystem considerations



I. Advances in Ecosystem Science and Assessment

Challenges

Regional Differences

Capacity Limitations

Ad Hoc Uptake

Recommendations

Consistent Availability

Expand Collaborations

Strategic Guidance

- Differences in data/information available by region
- Commitment to making resources available
- Expand data collection and collaboration with partners, integrate local ecological knowledge
- Define opportunities for on-ramping ecosystem information

II. Use social science expertise and information in decision making

- Variation in the scope/flexibility for SSCs to use socioeconomic data
 - Risk Policy and setting ABC by SSCs:
 - ABC setting focused on biological risk, ACL often set very close or equal to ABC, leaving little room for integration of socioeconomic impacts of decision making
 - Risk policies vary widely in integration of social science and economic metrics
 - With empirical assessments or when less quantitative biological data is available, SSCs utilize more socioeconomic information.
 - Risk policy and/or ABC control rules being revised, potentially to include socioeconomic data.
- More use of socioeconomic data in setting ACL/TAC by Councils (e.g., SEEM process)
- Some SSC involved in reviewing economic models and impacts

II. Use social science expertise and information in decision making

Challenges

Regional Differences



Recommendations

Engage and Formalize Use

- Respond to public testimony, foster relationships and trust
- Use of LEK, cooperative research, industry input

Capacity Limitations



More Coordination

- Coordination of focus of available staff resources.
- Define how SSCs can contribute

Ad hoc Uptake



Strategic Guidance

- Define on-ramps for social science
- Consider alignment of scales of data, timing of science and decision, and roles

III. Adapting reference points, control rules, and rebuilding plans to environmental change

- Examples of performance testing of Council control rules under climate change (e.g., Pacific sardine)
- Examples of integration of climate impacts into assessment (e.g., NCLIM)
- Examples of reference points being adjusted to account for changes in climate and ecosystems are emerging.
- Mechanisms and perceived rate of climate influence on stocks varies across regions.



EXIT

EXIT



Handwritten notes on a whiteboard, including a list of items and a section titled "Summary".

Participant in a red polo shirt, seated on the left side of the table.

Participant in a blue and white floral patterned shirt, seated on the left side of the table.

Participant in a light blue button-down shirt, seated at the front of the table with their back to the camera.

Participant in a grey polo shirt, seated at the front of the table with their back to the camera.

Group of participants seated on the right side of the table, including a man in a blue and red jacket and a woman in a white top.

III. Adapting reference points, control rules, and rebuilding plans to environmental change

Challenges

Recommendations

Data Limits



Consistent Availability

- Funding and planning to address data limitations
- More mechanistic studies

Process Rigidity



Analytical advances

- Integrate climate impacts into assessment and biological reference points

Ad hoc Uptake



Strategic Guidance

- Simulation testing (MSE)
- Retrospective analyses

System Rigidity



Proactive actions

- Regulatory actions required to allow future flexibility (phase-in, carryover)

SCS8 Goal: Provide Actionable Guidance

- Given **very real limitations** in data, capacity, our understanding of ecosystem change and fish and fishery impacts, and funding:
 - How can we do more with what we have right now?
 - What action can we take in our specific regions?
 - Are there national level policy changes that need to be made to enable these actions?

Development of Council Action Plans

- Plan for how each Council delegation would bring SCS8 recommendations home to continue the dialogue and take action on recommendations.
- **Framing of actions**
 - Audience/Scale
 - Timeline/Priority
 - Process
 - Partners and resources
 - Next Steps...



NEFMC Action Items

Action Item 1: Develop a working group on reference points that spans management and science and supports goals to redefine reference points in a dynamic environment.

Audience: Council, GARFO, and NEFSC

Timeline: Long term vs short term (1-3 years)

Scale: Regional, within New England (or joint with Mid-Atlantic)

Prioritization: urgent (1-2 year)

Process: Council priority

Partners: Council to develop work group (e.g. SSC members, NEFSC, GARFO, etc.)

Resources Needed: Council staff to coordinate, funding for convening

Next Steps: Bring to new NEFMC IRA steering committee. Build a NEFMC focused group.

NEFMC Action Items

Action Item 2: Plan meeting of SSC, NOAA's social science branch, and Council's PDTs focused on including social science more explicitly in the management process.

Audience: SSC, NEFSC SSB, Council staff and Council

Timeline: 2025, short discussion in fall 2024

Scale: Regional, within New England

Prioritization: urgent, needed

Process: Staff to organize meeting

Partners: SCS, SSB

Resources Needed: Meeting organization

Next Steps: Preliminary mtg fall 2024

Follow-up

- Currently drafting SCS8 final report.
- SCS8 delegates presenting outcomes and draft region-specific action items to their own SSCs.
- Continued communication
- Some Councils planning for region-specific SSC workshops on theme.

Field Trip: Red's Best



Acknowledgements

- SCS8 Steering Committee (26 SSC members, Council and NOAA staff)
- Urban Harbors Institute facilitation team: Kim Starbuck (lead facilitator)
- Janet Coit, NOAA Assistant Administrator
- NEFMC Hosts
 - Rick Bellavance, Acting Chair
 - Cate O’Keefe, Executive Director
 - Administrative and technical staff support
- All SCS8 participants
- Funding
 - NOAA Fisheries
 - NEFMC
 - All Regional Councils