

8th National Workshop of the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee

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Council Coordination Committee
October 16, 2024



SCS8 Workshop: Applying ABC Control Rules in a Changing Environment

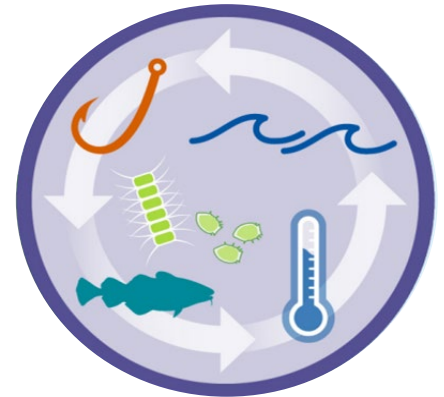


Hosted by New England Fishery Management Council in
Boston, MA (August 26-28, 2024)

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

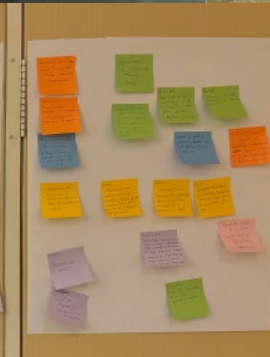
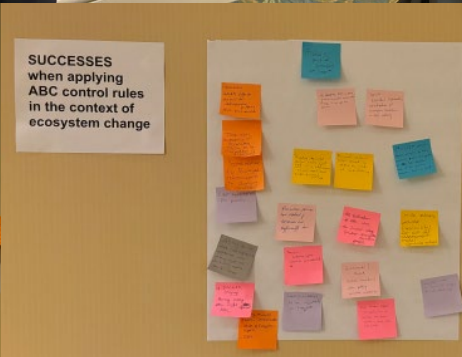
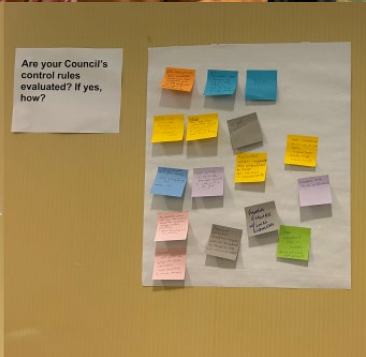
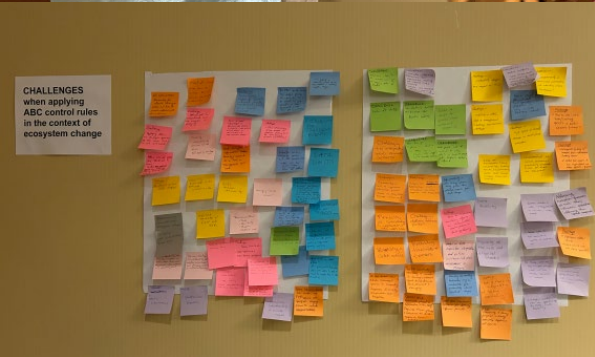
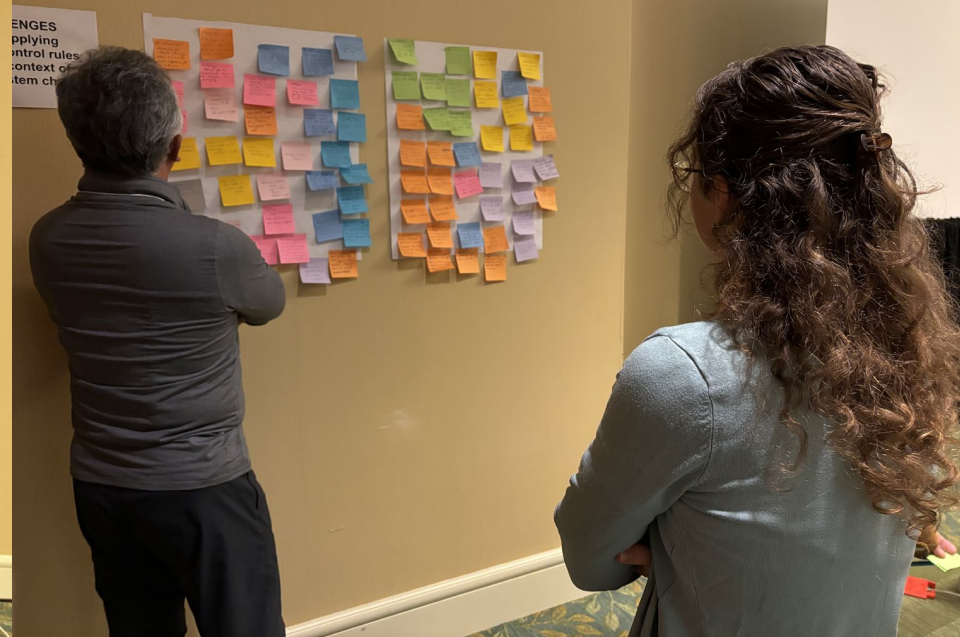


Topics We Covered

- **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, some use of ramped control rules. Empirical approaches (index or catch) used in data-limited 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

Recommendations

Data Limitations



Basic research

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

Stock Assessment Performance



Analytical advances

- Integrate climate impacts into assessment and reference points

ABC Control Rule Performance



Performance evaluation

- Simulation testing (MSE)
- Retrospective analyses

System Rigidity



Proactive actions

- 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 characterizing 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.



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...



Examples of Council-specific Action Items

- Data-poor regions to explore alternative management frameworks and data collection schedules/methods to overcome existing barriers.
- Leverage existing expertise to consider alternative management pathways to integrate socioeconomic data into decision making.
- Build conceptual model of the management process and identify constraints that prevent changes to management in response to climate change.
- Develop working group of managers and scientists to focus on strategic guidance on changing reference points in response to ecosystem change.

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.

Follow-up

- Currently drafting SCS8 final report, final expected within 2024.
- SCS8 delegates presenting outcomes and draft region-specific action items to their own SSCs.
- Continued communication
 - Among SSC staff coordinators.
 - Informal webinar of SCS in early 2025 to share progress on action items.
- Some Councils planning for region-specific SSC workshops on this theme.
- After Council Executive Directors confirm host Council for SCS9 in 2026, SCS to develop proposed theme; could present to CCC in May 2025 for approval.

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