

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Limit Reference Points and the Fish Stocks Provisions: Joint Technical Expertise in Stock Assessment (TESA) / National Operational Guidelines (NOG) Task Force Workshop

Dates: November 29 – December 3, 2021 (8:30 – 12:30 PAC; 11:30 – 15:30 NCR/QC, 12:30 – 16:30 MAR/GULF, 13:00 – 17:00 NL)

Location: Virtual (MS Teams)

Chairs: Tim Barrett, Julie Marentette

Context

Canada's [Fisheries Act](#) (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-14) was revised on June 21, 2019, resulting in new Fish Stocks provisions (FSP) that relate to the management of fisheries. The requirements of the FSP are being interpreted through the lens of the Fisheries and Oceans Canada's (DFO) Sustainable Fisheries Framework suite of policies, in particular the *Fishery decision-making framework incorporating the precautionary approach* (PA Policy, DFO 2009), and are expected to come into force with the prescription of the first batch of *major fish stocks* and associated regulations for rebuilding plan requirements. Supporting the implementation of the FSP through the lens of the PA Policy means, among other things, that the Science Sector:

- Establishes a single limit reference point (LRP) for each candidate or prescribed major fish stock (the “one-stock-one-LRP” requirement; DFO 2021a);
- Estimates stock status relative to the LRP (the trigger for rebuilding plan requirements under s 6.2; DFO 2021b) or other reference points; and
- Supports the prescription of defined major fish stocks that are composed of one species, can be defined geographically, and for which a single LRP has been identified.

To support Science Sector activities in DFO's implementation of the FSPs, national operational guidelines (NOG) for science are under development through 2024, including the development of guidance for reference points and stock status. In this workshop, the NOG Task Force is partnering with the Technical Expertise in Stock Assessment (TESA) Program to explore limit reference points. The TESA Program is directed by DFO quantitative experts and aims to build capacity and promote technical expertise in fish stock assessment through annual delivery of training courses and national workshops on strategic topics in stock assessment.

Objectives

1. To increase understanding and awareness of the requirements of the Fish Stocks provisions for Science, particularly with respect to LRPs and stock status;
2. To facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise on practical aspects of the process of (and some of the challenges associated with) selecting methods for identifying LRPs and estimating stock status, and;
3. To explore and/or recommend possible considerations for national operational guidelines for stock assessment experts in setting LRPs and estimating stock status in a range of situations.

Our hope is that the results of these discussions will also help to inform a CSAS Advisory Process, “Science advice on guidance for limit reference points under the Fish Stocks provisions”, anticipated in 2022.

Format and Participants

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with its accompanying travel restrictions and workload challenges and pressures continuing through 2021, this workshop will be virtual in nature and limited to four hours per day in order to accommodate participants in different time zones.

Workshop participants will be from DFO, although guest speakers may be invited from outside the Department.

To assist with preparations for the meeting, we may provide in advance of the workshop:

- A **pre-requisite activity and shared materials** to assist participants (e.g., a survey on principles and best practices, Excel sheets and/or R code to do reference point calculations, key references) in preparing for the workshop.

Expected Products

- A **Proceedings** with workshop highlights, general findings, and breakout group summaries.
- **Online repositor(ies)** of documents, code, data and methods to facilitate the continued exchange of knowledge after the workshop has finished.
 - A folder within TESA's [GitHub account](#) will be created. All participants will be invited to join.
- An **MS Teams** link to facilitate communications and follow-up collaborations after the workshop.

References (for Interest)

DFO. 2009. A fishery decision-making framework incorporating the precautionary approach. Last updated 2009-03-23. Available from <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/reports-rapports/regs/sff-cpd/precaution-eng.htm>

DFO. 2016. Proceedings of the National Peer Review on the Development of Technical Guidelines for the Provision of Scientific Advice on the Various Elements of Fisheries and Oceans Canada Precautionary Approach Framework; February 28-March 1, 2012. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Proceed. Ser. 2015/005. Available from https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/Pro-Cr/2015/2015_005-eng.html

DFO. 2021a. Science Advice for Precautionary Approach Harvest Strategies under the Fish Stocks Provisions. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2021/004. Available from https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2021/2021_004-eng.html

DFO. 2021b. Science Guidelines to Support Development of Rebuilding Plans for Canadian Fish Stocks. DFO Can. Sci. Advis. Sec. Sci. Advis. Rep. 2021/006. Available from https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas-sccs/Publications/SAR-AS/2021/2021_006-eng.html