Response to reviewers

**Reviewer: Dr. Robyn Forrest**

We thank Dr. Forrest for her review. The editorial comments that she raised have been addressed and are detailed below.

The revised report is now more explicit about the contents of the GitHub repository and includes references to it where appropriate.

As suggested, a paragraph about the SmartDots software, and an associated reference, were added.

**Minor editorial comments:**

*I wonder if the report should contain the standard map of DFO regions? Not all external readers will be familiar with the boundaries of each region. The report relies quite heavily on reporting talks from different regions.*

**DONE: a new Figure showing the geographic boundaries of the different DFO regions was added.**

*L116. Change “are” to “is” in “assessments are available”*

**DONE**

*L127. Change both instances of “that” to “who”*

**DONE**

*Table 2 is cited before Table 1 in the report. Switch them.*

**DONE**

*Figure 1 is never cited. Make sure it is cited before Figure 2, or switch.*

**DONE: citation to Figure 1 was added.**

*L144. Perhaps indicate that Table 1 also includes links to the presentations. In general, relevant items on the repository could be cited throughout the report, if appropriate.*

**DONE: the text now mentions that links to all presentations appear in Table 1.**

*L155. concern marine stocks in the Atlantic …*

**DONE**

*L156. The recommendations also apply to a number of different structures*

**DONE**

*L181. … the point where they can reliably estimate ages for a range of species? and can teach others [I feel like it can’t take five years to become proficient in ageing one species]*

**DONE**

*L191. Quebec has an accent acute here but not elsewhere*

**DONE: all occurrences of Quebec now have an accent**

*L211. Reads a bit awkwardly. Suggest “If otoliths are read with the help of solutions such as glycerin, otoliths should be cleaned, dried and stored dry after reading”*

**DONE**

*L250. It would be helpful to add one or two sentences about what the SmartDots tool is/does. Is there a citation?*

**DONE: an additional sentence describing the SmartDots software and an appropriate citation were added.**

*L265. a number of software****s***

**DONE**

*L328-331. Is the R package referred to on L328 called CatchR? If so, make the link the first time it is mentioned*

**DONE**

*L341. Change to “Finally, a group discussion took place …”*

**DONE**

*L341. Change appears to appear*

**DONE**

*L413. Ageing strucures removed from an individual animal should be …*

**DONE**

*L420. 3. Reference collection****s***

**DONE**

*L447. 4h. I think this means have at least two trained age readers for any given stock*

**DONE**

*L451. 5b. … for many year****s***

**DONE**

*L476-479. Long awkward sentence. I struggled to understand what was to be regularly updated “the pattern in the growth structures recognition”? I’m not sure what that means*

**DONE: this recommendation was rephrased as “Rates of growth are likely to change, and so are the patterns associated with age estimation, so regularly revisit the patterns used for estimating ages. Additionally, the patterns used to identify periods of weaker or stronger growth and/or changes in the timing of annuli formation should be regularly revisited.”**

*L482. 8c. This is a statement not a recommendation. What is the recommendation?*

**DONE: changed to “As northward migration of species will shift stock boundaries and change the species that will require science advice, the expertise associated with age estimation of new species must be acquired accordingly.”**

*Table 1 (which I think should be Table 2). I did not check all the links, please double check they all work*

**DONE: all links have been double checked and they all work.**

*Figure 2. This is picky but it would be easier to read if the regions were in different colours, and for the axis labels and strip text fonts to be bigger*

**DONE: the revised figure now uses different colors for the different DFO regions, and uses the same color palette as the new figure showing the DFO regions.**

**Reviewer: Stephanie Sardelis**

We thank Stephanie for her review. The editorial comments that she raised have been addressed and are detailed below.

*On line 202, a space is missing between “place.” and “In”.*

**DONE**

*Under Recommendations, 1. Institutional, is (b) external to the Department? Would this also fall under the purview of the working group?*

**DONE: yes, this recommendation is external to the Department, we combined recommendations 1b and 1c to make this point clearer.**