

## **21.4 Guidelines for allowable changes to operational assessments**

### **2017 Operational Groundfish Assessments (vers. Aug. 28, 2017)**

This document is intended to serve as guidance to assessment leads as they develop and carry out operational assessments for groundfish stocks in 2017. This guidance was developed in consultation with assessment staff and members of the Assessment Oversight Panel.

#### **Factors Considered when Evaluating Potential Admissible Changes**

- Departure from Benchmark model configuration
- Magnitude of impact in terms of scale/ status determination
- Novelty of data or measures (i.e., new vs updated data/measures)
- Experimental evidence vs anecdotal
- Management considerations

Change	Acceptable	Notes
<b>Measures in Trend</b>		
Survey Indices	NOT OK	
LPUE Indices	NOT OK	
<b>Measures of Scale</b>		
New or Revised Measures of Catchability	OK	Peer Review of white papers on catchability for Witch Flounder and Yellowtail Flounder was challenging due to time constraints. The catchability estimates will be used as follows: i.) Plan B assessments (i.e., empirical approach assessments) will incorporate new Q, presuming peer review approves methods/application ii.) Plan A assessment will not incorporate new Q, but new Q will be provided alongside the assessment, with relevant context to enable review panel to appropriately interpret (or not) the Q information.
Discard Mortality	OK	
Recalibrated Catch Estimates	NOT OK	This is NOT OK for use in the 2017 groundfish assessments because it is specifically referring to MRIP data that are being reestimated and will not be available for use in assessments until 2018. Recalibrated estimates will be applied for use in 2018/19 operational assessments to address MRIP issues. This row is not referring to updated catch streams that result from applying new approved discard mortality estimates, database corrections, etc., which are allowed.
<b>Bases for Reference Points</b>		
Change in values but not change basis of reference points	OK	
Updated model priors	OK	Only if from peer reviewed sources, and specifically NOT OK for changes in steepness.
Regime Change (e.g., truncated SR time series, use of environmental predictors)	NOT OK	
<b>Changes in Model Configuration/Identification</b>		
Selectivity Stanzas		
Historical selectivity stanzas	NOT OK	
Most recent selectivity stanza	OK	
Changes in selectivity function	NOT OK	
Differential weighting of likelihood	NOT OK	

Change	Acceptable	Notes
Introduction of retrospective adjustment for terminal B, F	OK	Strive for consistent application of adjustments across stock assessments.
Downweighting of information (e.g., year classes)	NOT OK	Individual researchers can make marginal changes to weighting for purposes of convergence, but these must be documented and accepted by AOP.
Splitting survey indices	NOT OK	
New Models	NOT OK	
<b>Biological Information</b>		
Natural Mortality	NOT OK	
Updating Growth (i.e., data only, not the model)	OK	
Updating Maturation (.e. data only, not the model)	OK	
Updating age at length (i.e., data only, not method)	OK	
<b>Projection Inputs</b>	Depends	Generally, marginal changes to data quality and data updates are admissible. But a major deviation from the benchmark method would be inadmissible.