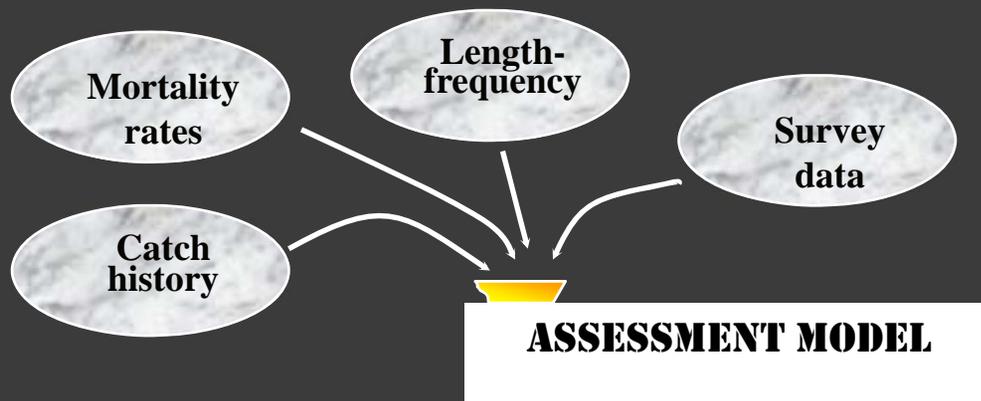


# STAR Panel Process and SSC Reviews

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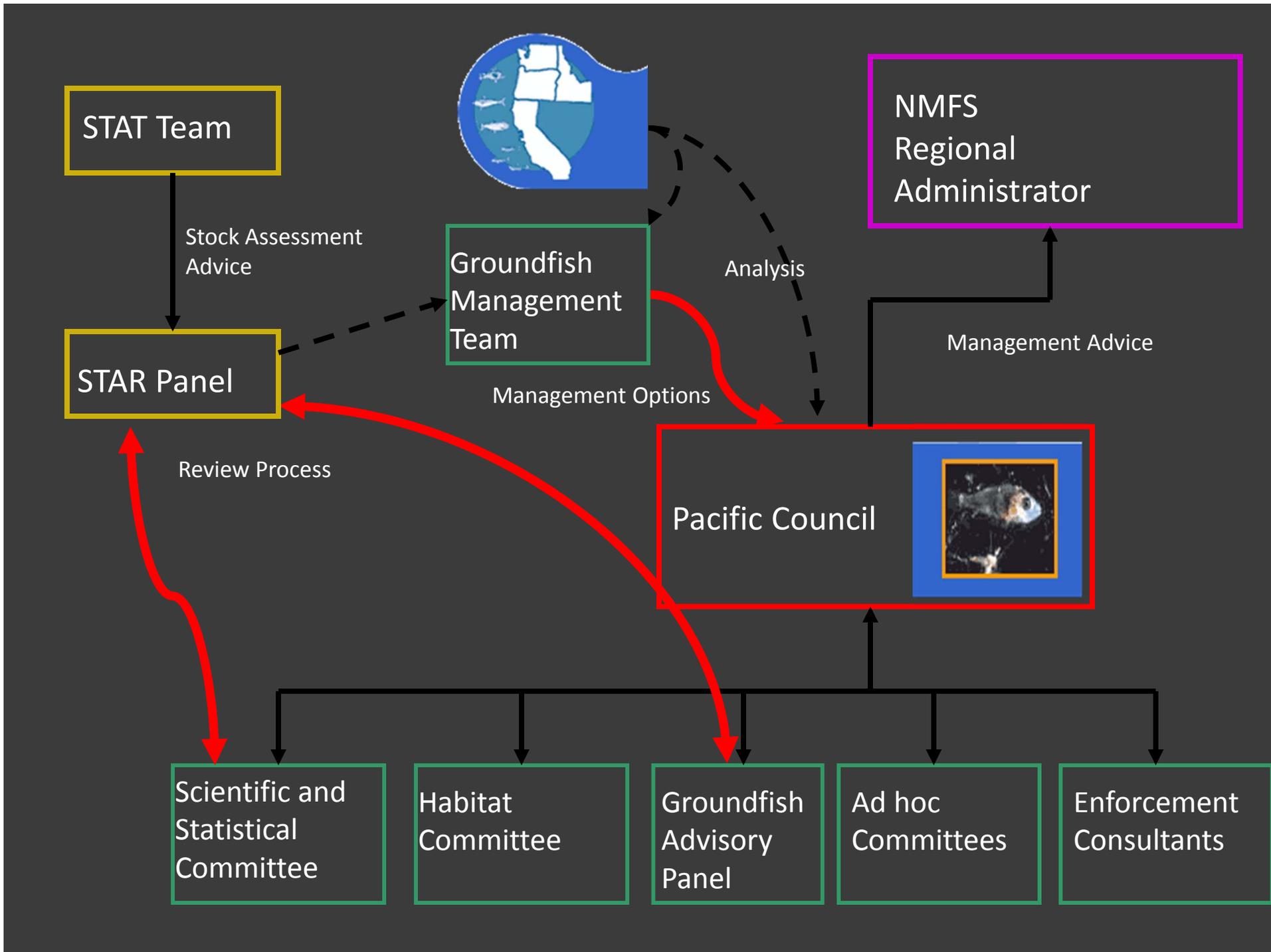


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# Overview

- Roles and responsibilities
- Terms of Reference
  - Methodology reviews
  - Assessment reviews
- Thoughts on the Review Process

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



# Roles and Responsibilities-I

- Methodology reviews:
  - SSC role: synthesize methodology-related topics from past reviews / upcoming issues & respond to requests for methodology reviews from advisory bodies / states / the public.
  - Center role: feedback on need, feasibility, costs (ultimately the workhouse for most methodology reviews).
  - Council role: ultimate decision maker in terms of priorities (the PFMC seldom does not support proposed methodology reviews).

# Roles and Responsibilities-II

- Assessment Planning:
  - Center: synthesize needs (stock status, trends, when last assessment was conducted)
  - SSC and Center (largely jointly): ranking amongst the options
  - Council: final decisions

# Roles and Responsibilities-III

## SSC

- Chair of review meeting (organizes agenda, prepares report, follows process after the review, keeps the review on track)
- Often provides a 2<sup>nd</sup> member of the SSC as an additional reviewer
- Reviews the final product of the review, including resolution of conflicts among reviewers, between the STAT and STAR, etc).
- Interpretation of the assessment outcomes (e.g. Assignment of Tier level; selection of OFL, ABC)

## STAT

Generally NMFS  
scientists

## OTHERS

- Council staff
- AP Adviser
- MT Adviser

# Roles and Responsibilities-IV

(Update and data-moderate assessments)

## Update Assessments

- Update assessments are reviewed by the SSC groundfish subcommittee
- This seems to work given that very few changes (except additional of data) between full and subsequent update assessments are allowed.

## Data-moderate Assessments

- This is a new development (even if the types of methods are used regularly in other regions)
- Currently reviewed by a STAR Panel and then SSC.
- There needs to be some “expectation management” with these assessments – they can’t be expected to be A-1 but using data must be better than guessing (at least on average)
- The 2013 data-moderate panel had too many stocks (4 seems right, especially if, as is ideal, multiple models are considered.
- There is an increasing danger of data-semi-moderate assessments

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

# Issues and concerns-I

- These have evolved considerably over time in response to needs / concerns (most of the action occurred between ~2001 and 2007):
  - Methodology Reviews
  - Assessments
    - Full
    - Update
    - Data moderate
    - Catch report
  - Rebuilding Analyses
- TORs are now followed much better than originally which makes reviews much simpler (in >90% of cases, all key information is in the draft document).
- TORs always seem to lead to longer documents: perhaps we need to go to e-documents (with TORS for those)

# Issues and Concerns-II

- TOR are needed for data-poor assessments. Some issues which need addressing:
  - Currently DCAC and DB-SRA are “approved” – how are additional methods “approved”?
  - In principle, data-poor methods involve “push button” applications but there is a push for “mission creep” such as:
    - The depletion distribution based on PSA scores.
    - Pegging the depletion distribution for one stock to that for another stock.

# ASSESSMENT REVIEWS



# Pros and Cons-I

- Two assessments for each Panel is a vast improvement on the 2005 four-assessment panels.
- Availability of SS3 as a common platform has substantially eased model specification and evaluation (e.g. The R show).
  - Use of SS3 can stifle innovation (but the cost is less than concerns over unvalidated code)
- There is a need to educate some (external) reviewers – a reviewer who doesn't understand the process can ruin a good review.
- The quality of the review is directly proportional to the skill (and knowledge) of the Chair – although Council Staff are helpful to keep things on track.

# Pros and Cons II

- There is a danger of assessment reviews becoming ‘workshops’ where the outcome are a ‘joint product’.
  - Andre’s view: deference should be given to the STAT in matters of preference – the STAR should focus on:
    - Errors / missing data / weird model outcomes
    - Decisions which are consequential but poorly justified.
- The worst situation is when a reviewer wishes to impose their ‘world view’ on an assessment.
- PFMC STAR Panels impose the “wall of science” (matters of policy and recommendations for OFLs / ABCs are outside of the scope of the reviews – this is GOOD).

# Pros and Cons III

- The peer-review process will be NEVER be fully transparent to the public but:
  - Trust certainly helps (a focus on ensuring “risk neutral science” is key)
  - Public presentation of assessments / how do assessments at Council meetings would be useful.
- The PFMC process is (IMHO) the most thorough anywhere:
  - Clear guidelines through the TORs
  - Independence of the reviewers and reviewed
  - Very clearly documented assessment outcomes
  - Public in all respects
  - The availability of Stacey Miller facilitates storage of historical assessments (so assessments can be repeated if needed).

# Issues to resolve

- How much material is sufficient for a Panel to prepare for a review?
- What is the role of the advisers – they can be very involved or not at all.
- Extensions:
  - More emphasis on qualitative concerns which could help the SSC select Tier levels.
  - Integrated ‘ecosystem considerations’ appropriately.



# QUESTIONS?

