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# Limiting Factors and Bottlenecks Affecting Assessment Throughput

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# Overview of Constraints

- Staffing - Participation
- Biennial Cycle & Review Demands
- Constraints on Updated Assessments
- Available Time for Assessment Development
- Age-determination Capacity
- Institutional Resource Limits

# Assessment Constraints

## Staffing - Participation

- Marginal increases in assessment & support staff over the past decade
- Hiring challenges
- Assessment participation/leadership by non-NMFS persons has fallen dramatically
- Limited resources for post-Docs to assist with needed research
  - Funding and space

# Assessment Constraints

## Biennial Cycle, Review Demands, Update TORs

- Cycle limits throughput, but can help preserve research opportunities
- STAR reviews are time-consuming, for STATs and SSC members
- Strict rules for updated assessments:
  - Steer assessments to benchmark route
  - Create problems when things go wrong
- More use of Updates, Data-moderates

# Assessment Constraints

## Available Time for Assessment Development

- Back end:
  - Early August deadline; many due in May
- Front end:
  - Availability of final data: Feb. - April
- Responses:
  - Improve data turnaround for surveys
  - Reduce data assembly-prep time

# Assessment Constraints

## Age-determination Capacity

- No FTEs; rely on grant with PSMFC
- Increase in staffing, from 4 to 7
- Large inventory of un-aged or poorly-aged (and unusable) samples
- Staffing is inadequate to read all inventory and new, using conventional methods
- Research on alternative methods underway

## Other processing of biological samples

# Assessment Constraints

## Institutional Resource Limitations

- Computing power
  - No mainframes; login restrictions
  - Desktops less powerful than rec gamers use
- Travel (and related budget) restrictions
  - Challenges in working with NMFS staff
  - Reduced interaction with stakeholders
  - Less explanation of results to Council
  - Fewer opportunities for professional growth, sharing, and networking



# Summary

- Council cycle is not changing (anytime soon)
- STAR/Benchmarks are resource hogs, but they:
  - Have facilitated improved stakeholder acceptance
  - Yield assessments with unsurpassed peer review
- Efforts are underway to improve data throughput
- More resources are needed to:
  - Conduct assessments and related analyses (MSEs)
  - Produce data from biological sampling
- Agency solutions are needed for
  - Computing, travel, and hiring issues