

Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Guidelines to Proposal Writers

To: Those who have submitted proposals for changes in Atka mackerel, P. cod, and pollock fisheries RE: SSL protection measures

From: Bill Wilson

Date: January 30, 2007

At the last SSL Mitigation Committee meeting, the Committee decided to start the proposal review process at their upcoming April 2007 meeting. This meeting will occur April 17-19, 2007 at the NMFS Regional Administrator's conference room in Juneau. The SSLMC asks that proposers attend this meeting to present your proposal(s) to the Committee, to answer questions about your proposal(s), and to discuss possible supplemental information the Committee may request from you.

The Committee will follow a procedure for proposal review that includes ranking the proposals with the Proposal Ranking Tool (PRT), followed by a discussion of the proposals with proposers to be sure the Committee completely understands the proposal. After this is completed, the Committee will also review the proposals as appropriate with "outside the model" data sets. See the process outlined in more detail below.

The SSLMC asks that you review this process and come to the April 17-19 meeting prepared to present your proposal(s) with these guidelines in mind. The PRT will be used to score all proposals. To help you understand how features of proposals may be ranked using this model, refer to the attached hierarchy of elements the Committee will use to judge each proposal. You can read the updated draft PRT report which documents the structure of the model by referring to the Council's web site. Please note that the PRT is one of several methods the SSLMC will use to evaluate proposals.

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The proposal review process will involve the following steps:

1. Proposals will be initially reviewed by a subcommittee of the SSLMC composed of "impartial" individuals (those without any connection to any proposal). Proposals will be broken down into components that can be fit into the PRT, and status quo for each proposal will be defined. Proposals evaluated by the PRT will have explicit geographical and/or temporal components. Status quo for each proposal is the management situation that exists before the proposed action, in the same geographical and/or temporal space.

2. The subcommittee will then discuss their initial review and PRT model runs with the entire SSLMC. The SSLMC will discuss the Subcommittee's review of each proposal and how the Subcommittee developed status quo for each proposal. No scoring of proposals will occur until proposers present their proposals to the full Committee.
3. The SSLMC will receive presentations from proposers and discuss/request additional information, if needed. This will occur at the April 17-19, 2007 meeting.
4. At the May 7-10, 2007 meeting the SSLMC will receive the additional information requested from proposers. At that time the SSLMC will determine if it fully understands the proposal. The SSLMC will also review any new scientific information available since the last series of briefings, and discuss this information as it may relate to the PRT. The Proposal Scoring Subcommittee may be asked to meet to prepare preliminary scores; both the proposal and its status quo would be scored by the Subcommittee, and the difference between scores may be the metric used to rank the proposals. The full SSLMC will review these scores and rankings. The SSLMC will discuss proposal ranking with proposers as needed. The SSLMC will then finalize proposal scores and rankings based on the PRT model runs, and the SSLMC will define how each proposal will be further reviewed with data sets or information considered "outside the model".
5. The SSLMC will meet to evaluate proposals with data sets that have been assembled for evaluating proposals "outside the model". These data sets will include:
 - a) All recorded data on individual SSL rookery and haulout site counts and trends – for more insights into a proposal's potential effects on special SSL sites, on regions where count trends are known, etc.
 - b) The Gaichas and Hiatt data table on fishery bycatch of SSL prey items by region and season (see Appendix F of the PRT report) – for insights into a proposal's potential bycatch effects – that is, removals of prey items other than pollock, P. cod, or Atka mackerel from an area where SSLs consume these "other" items
 - c) Harvest rate data by gear and target species for gear type considerations that have to do with potential fish removal rate
 - d) Annual TACs, by region, season, and fishery, from the specifications tables – to evaluate potential effects of a proposal on other fisheries or regions
 - e) Information on special or unique SSL sites – research reports on Marmot Island, for example - will be used to judge a proposal's potential effects on any known SSL sites that might be uniquely sensitive
 - f) SSLs and gear interactions data
 - g) Other data sets as needed
6. Proposals will also be evaluated in light of other potential effects or benefits such as:
 - a) Does the proposal include a research component, thereby providing benefit to science along with the requested change in the fishery

- b) Will the proposal result in improved ability to manage a fishery; will the proposal complicate enforcement of the fishery; will it improve, or exacerbate, safety
 - c) Will the means in which the fishery is conducted be improved or otherwise affected by the proposal
 - d) What may be the social and/or economic effects
 - e) Will the proposal result in less competition with other fisheries, less grounds conflicts or preemption, smoother coordination with State fisheries, etc.
 - f) Are there other components of a proposal that may mitigate or minimize effects on SSLs
7. If the draft BiOp (expected June 1, 2007) establishes an alternative management emphasis for wSSL, the SSLMC may need to revisit the weightings in the PRT (but not the model structure). In this case the positioning of proposals within the model would still be valid, but the model weightings, and thus the proposal rankings, may shift.
8. The SSLMC will then meet to prepare a package of recommendations to the Council.

You can view the latest draft of the PRT on the Council's web site. Contact Bill Wilson (907-271-2809 bill.wilson@noaa.gov) or Kristin Mabry (907-586-7490 kristin.mabry@noaa.gov) if you have questions.

Attachment: PRT hierarchy and weighting factors