

Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Guidelines to Proposal Writers

To: Those who have submitted proposals for changes in the Atka mackerel, Pacific cod, and pollock fisheries' SSL protection measures

From: Bill Wilson

Date: February 23, 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.** If additional information is requested from you, the SSLMC would like to receive it prior to, or during, their May 7-10, 2007 meeting.

The Committee will follow a procedure for proposal review over a two meeting cycle 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. The overall proposal review process is 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 updated draft PRT report which documents the structure of the model (this report is on the Council's web site). The SSLMC would also be interested in your view of how to score (or what constitutes) status quo for your proposal(s)(see Step 1 below). Please note that the PRT is one of several methods the SSLMC will use to evaluate proposals.

NOTE: The specific methods the SSLMC will use to score proposals using the PRT will be refined during their April 17-19 meeting. The weighting factors for the hierarchy elements in the model will be discussed and provided to proposers during that meeting.

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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). This Subcommittee will work out a process for how proposals will be broken down into components that can be fit into the PRT, and how status quo for each proposal will be defined. 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 of how the proposals fit the PRT with the entire SSLMC. The SSLMC will discuss the Subcommittee’s review of each proposal and how the Subcommittee would define status quo for each proposal. No scoring of proposals will occur until proposers present their proposals to the full Committee (see Step 3).
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 that it fully understands the proposals. 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, and the difference between scores may be the metric used to rank the proposals. The full SSLMC will review these scores and concur with the 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) Available 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 2007-2008 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. Based on their analysis of the proposals, the SSLMC will then develop a package of recommendations for review by the Council. Based on the Council review, the SSLMC may need to revise the recommendations and bring the package back to the Council for another review. Once approved by the Council, this package would be provided to NMFS and incorporated into the draft BiOp, which is expected in late 2007.

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.