



# NMFS Science Update

February 2017 CCC Meeting  
Washington, D.C.

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*NOAA Fisheries' Scientific Programs and Chief Science Advisor*  
Date: March 1, 2017

# Strategic Efforts to Improve NMFS Science

## Outline

Stock Assessment Prioritization Process

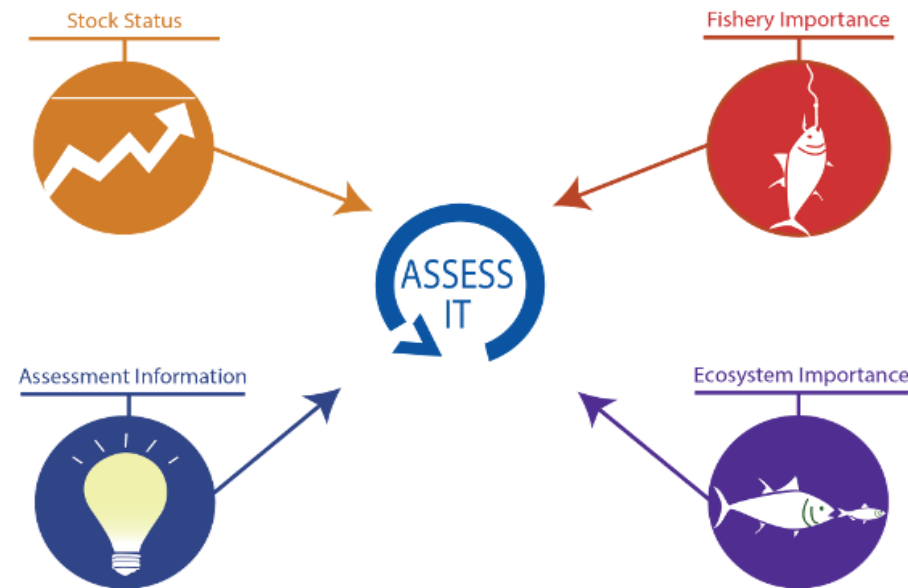
National Climate Science Strategy

Stock Assessment Improvement Plan

Best Scientific Information Available

# Stock Assessment Prioritization

- Tool for regions to systematically investigate annual assessment needs
- Results are advisory (non-binding)
- Implemented on a regional basis
  - Purpose: support wise allocation of resources within a region
  - Results do not support redistribution of resources between regions or to non-assessment activities

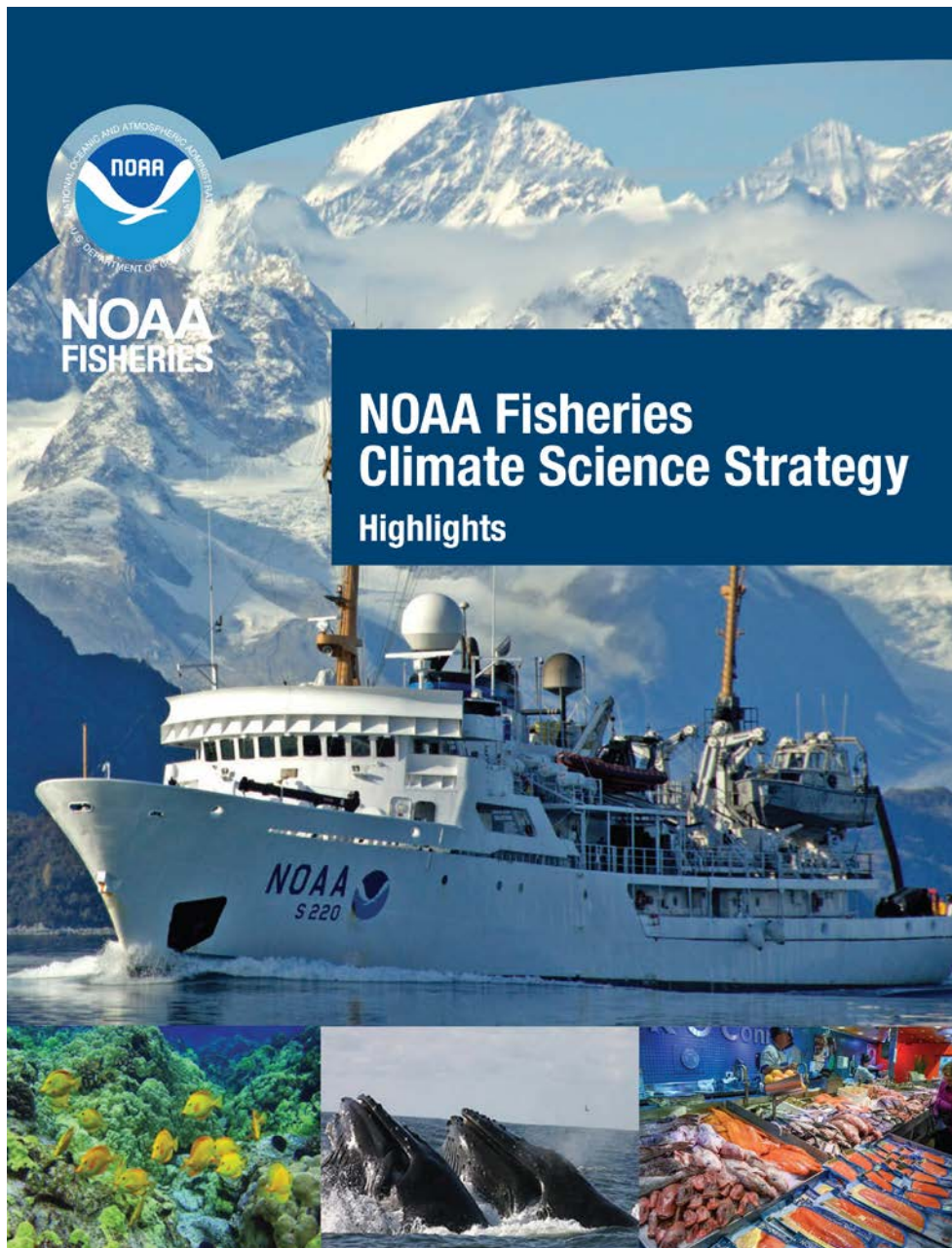


# Regional Prioritization Implementation



# Prioritization Implementation Updates

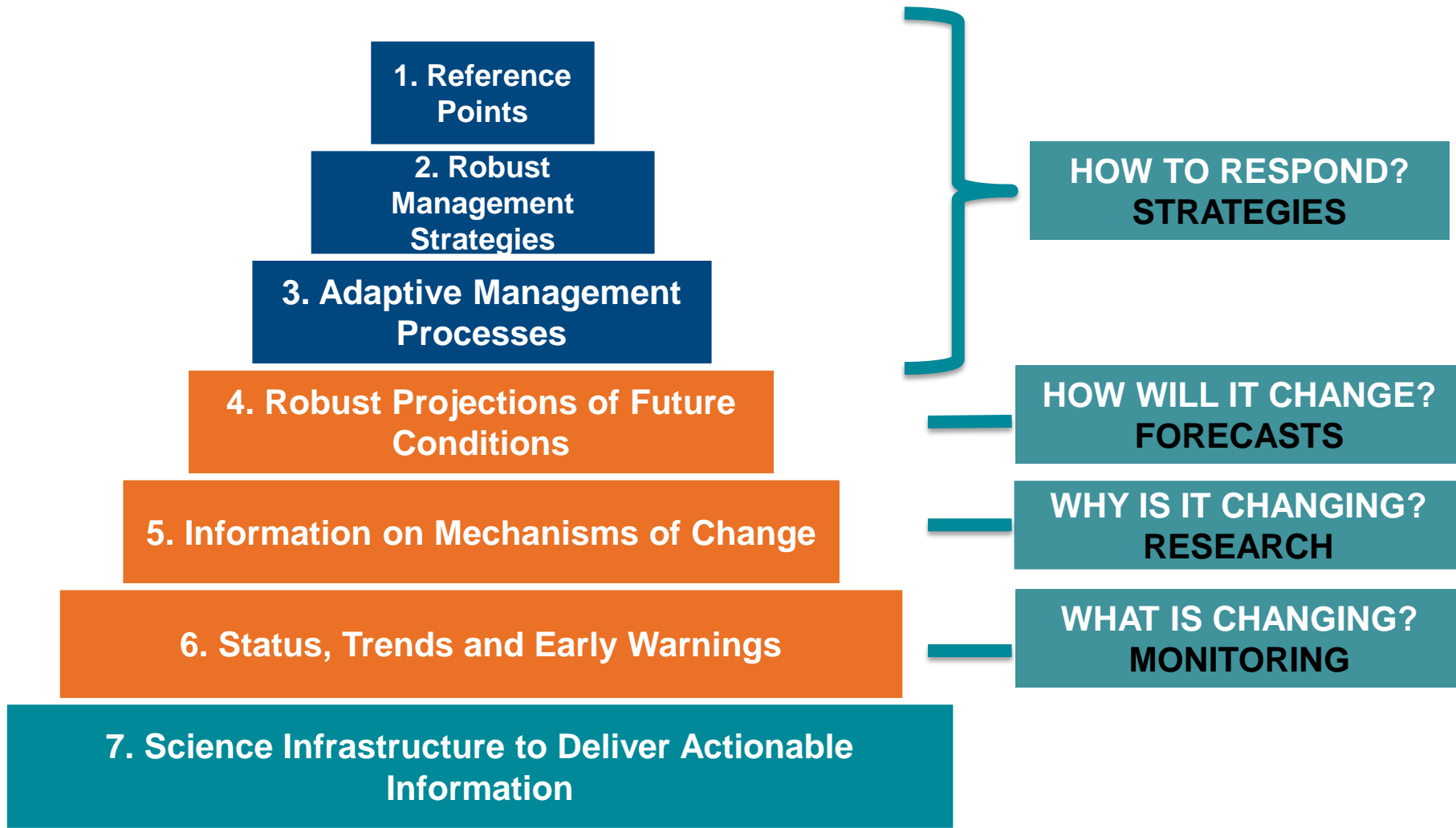
Council	Status	Comments
PFMC	<i>Complete</i>	Used to schedule 2017 groundfish assessments
NPFMC	<i>In progress</i>	Frequency changes provisionally adopted; Plan Teams will begin work on MSE to evaluate proposed changes
WPFMC	<i>Initiated</i>	Data gathering is underway
NEFMC/ MAFMC	<i>Initiated</i>	Ongoing discussions on coordination between two Councils via NRCC
SAFMC	<i>In progress</i>	Prioritization scores awaiting SSC review/expert input; rankings will be used to guide SEDAR planning
GMFMC	<i>Initiated</i>	Data gathering is underway
CFMC	<i>On hold</i>	Initiated with Council but awaiting new Fishery Ecosystem Plans



**Goal:**  
**Increase the  
production,  
delivery and use  
of climate-related  
information  
to fulfill  
NOAA Fisheries  
mandates**



# NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy identifies information needed to respond

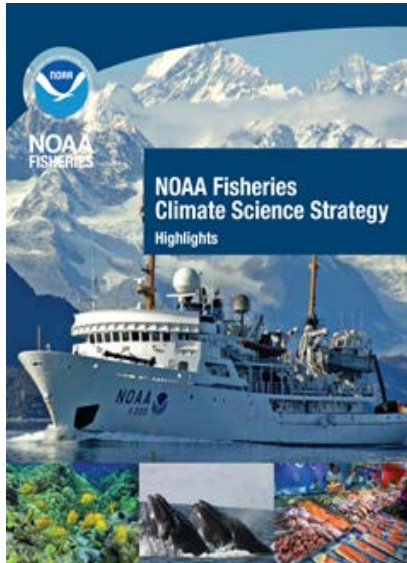


# NMFS Climate Science Strategy

## Climate Science Regional Action Plans

- Over 200 actions to support climate-ready fisheries management

Published Aug. 2015



Nearly complete in all regions

### RESULTS:

*Critical  
Information*

*Climate-  
Ready  
Management*

*Resilient  
Resources &  
Communities*



# NMFS Climate Science Strategy: Key actions

## WHAT IS CHANGING?

- ✓ Maintain existing monitoring of key fisheries and ecosystem conditions
- ✓ Track distributions of over 650 fisheries related species
- 👉 Strengthen Ecosystem Status Reports and early warnings

## WHY & HOW WILL IT CHANGE?

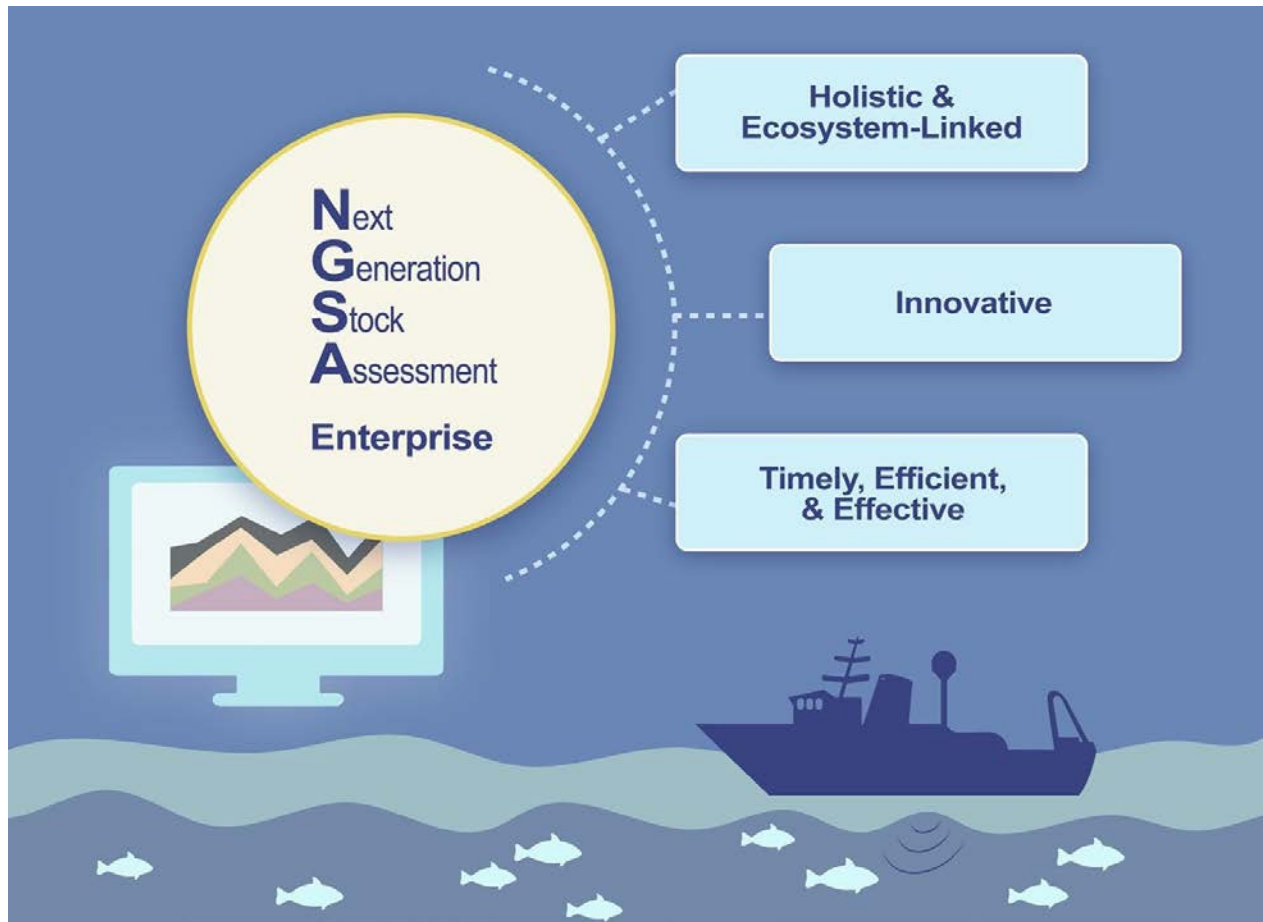
- ✓ Fish Stock Vulnerability Assessments (Northeast, Bering Sea, California Current)
- ✓ Launch new Fish Stock Vulnerability Assessments (Pacific Islands, Gulf of Mexico)
- ✓ Climate and fisheries research to inform Stock Assessments
- 👉 Improve Fishing Community Vulnerability Assessments
- 👉 Improve forecasts of changing oceans and fish stocks (e.g., Pacific Hake, Sea Scallop)

## HOW TO RESPOND?

- ✓ Build capacity for Management Strategy Evaluations in each region
- 👉 Evaluate future scenarios and fishery management strategies (e.g., Alaska & West Coast)

# STOCK ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

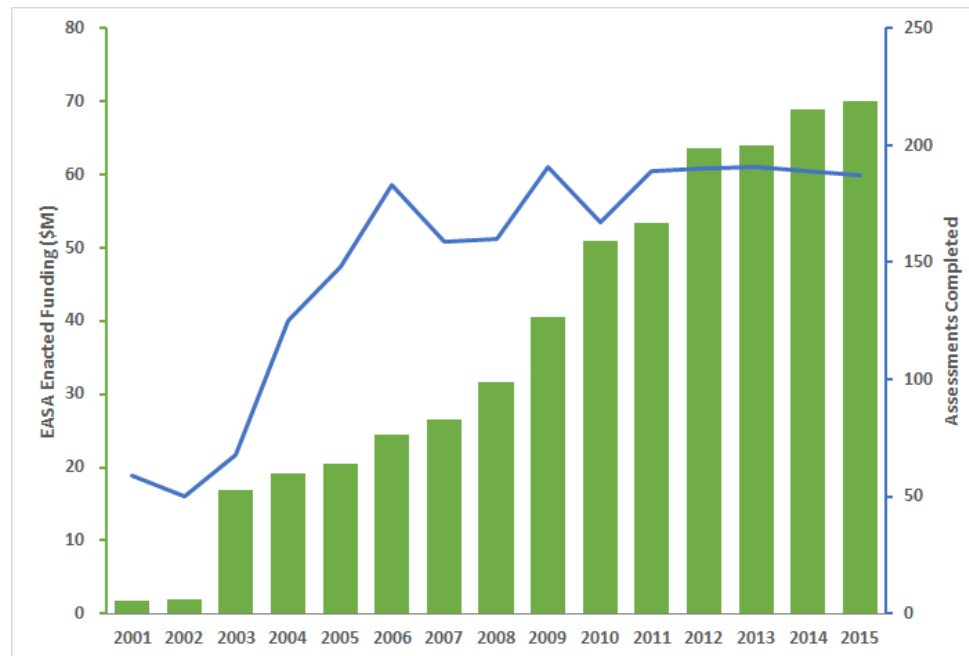
Implementing a Next Generation Stock Assessment Enterprise —  
*An Update to NOAA Fisheries' 2001 Stock Assessment Improvement Plan*



# STOCK ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Need for new strategic guidance that...

- Focuses on current issues & resource capacity
- Capitalizes on recent scientific advances
- Aligns with current legal mandates



# STOCK ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Major elements of the new plan

*Section 1—Accomplishments since 2001 SAIP*

*Section 2—State of current assessment enterprise*

*Section 3—Next generation*

- Expand scope of some assessments (ecosystem and economic linkages)
- Use new data collection & modeling technologies
- Refine 2015 prioritization process to help tailor assessment level/scope and support data gap analyses
- Enhance separation between assessment research and more streamlined operational (applied) assessments

# STOCK ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Request for review by Councils

### *Proposed approach*

- Council staff coordinate review with SSC (or subset)
- Provide separate file of comments w/ line number references (not embedded in document)
- Approve comments at an upcoming Council meeting
- Provide comments by **Friday, April 28, 2017**

# STOCK ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Points of contact

- Patrick Lynch

[Patrick.Lynch@noaa.gov](mailto:Patrick.Lynch@noaa.gov), (301) 427-8151

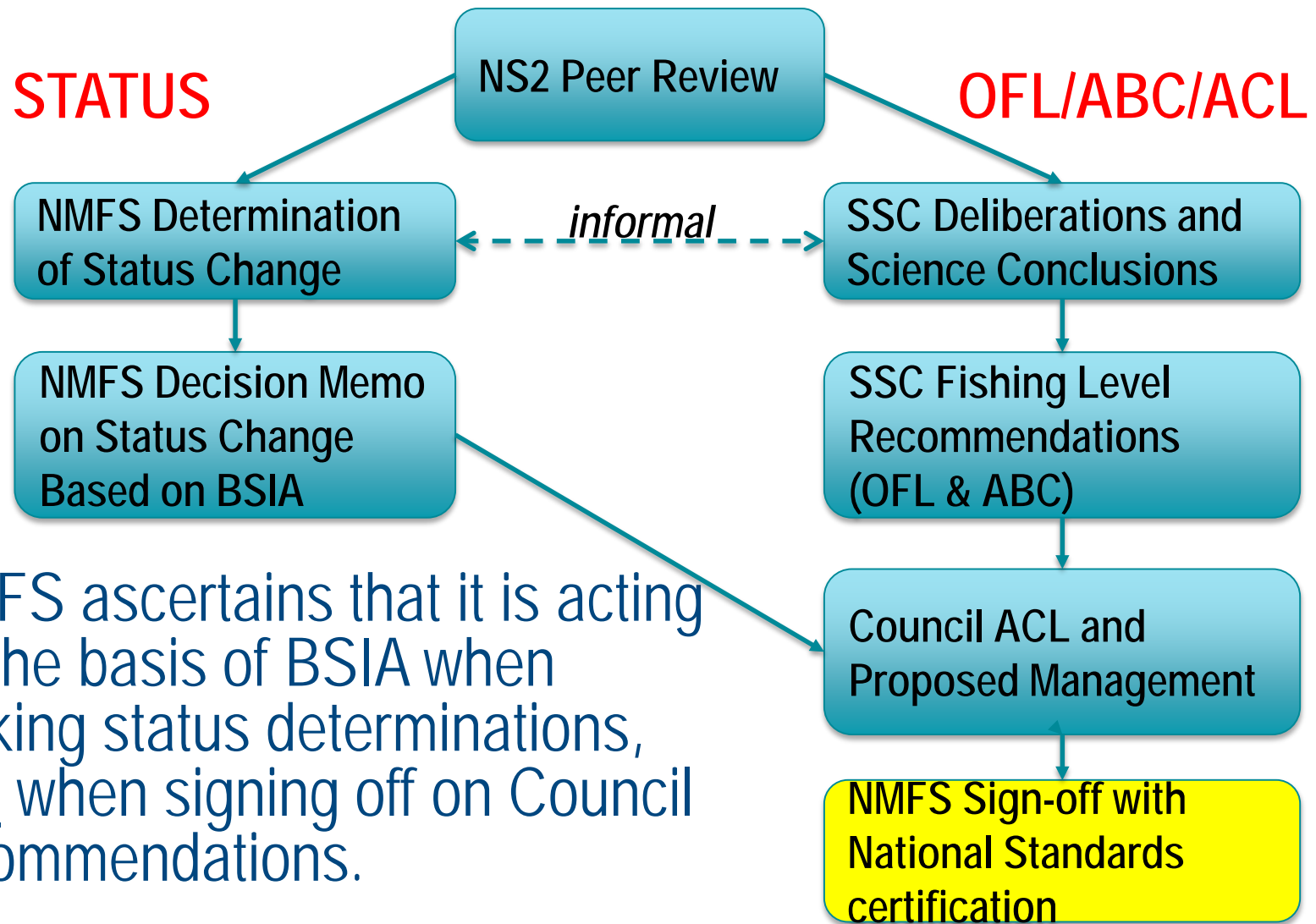
- Richard Methot

[Richard.Methot@noaa.gov](mailto:Richard.Methot@noaa.gov), (206) 860-3365

- Available for discussions & questions  
(email, phone, in person)



# BEST SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE



NMFS ascertains that it is acting on the basis of BSIA when making status determinations, and when signing off on Council recommendations.

# BEST SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE

## Where clarity is needed?

- When in the process BSIA is firmly decided
- SSC role in contributing to NMFS' BSIA determination
- How the BSIA determination is documented
- What constitutes a SAFE and who/when it is prepared

# BEST SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE

## Draft summary of recommendations

1. Document each regional BSIA process
  - How & when Center documents BSIA to Region
  - Contribution of SSC to the BSIA determination
2. Assessments and their reviews should separately evaluate four elements of fishing level recommendations:
  - BSIA for harvest policy and SDC basis
  - BSIA for overfished status
  - BSIA for overfishing status
  - BSIA for fishing level recommendations
3. If Plan Team or SSC is the review body, then need formal separation with their role as recommenders
4. Terms of Reference for assessments and their review should be improved per upcoming SAIP
5. Senior NMFS liaison should be available to each SSC

# BEST SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Forthcoming: request for review by Councils

*Proposed approach*

- Council staff coordinate review with SSC (or subset)
- Approve comments at an upcoming Council meeting
- Provide comments by **Friday, June 30, 2017**

# BEST SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE

## Points of contact

- Richard Methot  
[Richard.Methot@noaa.gov](mailto:Richard.Methot@noaa.gov), (206) 860-3365
- Patrick Lynch  
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- Deb Lambert  
[Deb.Lambert@noaa.gov](mailto:Deb.Lambert@noaa.gov), (301) 427-8560
- Available for discussions & questions  
(email, phone, in person)

# Thank you!

