



**NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Fifth Regular Session
Nagasaki, Japan
7-10 September 2009**

PEER REVIEW OF STOCK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERED BY SC5

**WCPFC-NC5-2009/IP-08
7 September 2009**

The Fifth Regular Session of the Scientific Committee requested that proposal for peer reviewing an SPC-OFP assessment be passed to the Northern Committee and ISC as an information paper for their consideration (SC5 Summary Report, Agenda 10.2). The following peer review proposal is extracted from the SC5 Summary Report for consideration by NC5.

Peer review of stock assessments

1. SC5 agreed the following points with regard to the recommendation of the Independent Review in respect of peer reviews of stock assessments undertaken by the Scientific Committee for consideration by the Commission:

- i. A periodic peer review was seen as strengthening assessments and their outcomes, improving transparency, building understanding and confidence, and helping to ensure best practice in the delivery of stock assessments to the Commission.
- ii. The results or absence of a peer review may not be used as an excuse to delay conservation and management actions.
- iii. The SC recommends to undertake a peer review of a single stock assessment initially and use the outcomes of this review to inform the scope and resource demands that would be considered in formulating subsequent reviews.
- iv. The SC recommends that an OFP assessment be selected for the initial review, in particular, the bigeye assessment undertaken for the WCPO;
- v. Given the perceived difficulties in completing the assessment by May for the review to be undertaken in June and the report made available in July (as recommended by MRAG), the SC proposed the following process for undertaking the review:
 - a. undertake a detailed review of the selected stock assessment considered by the SC the previous year;
 - b. provide an interim report to the Preparatory SA Workshop;
 - c. undertake a short review of the completed stock assessment report;
 - d. provide report on completed review to SC;
 - e. stock assessment group to provide comments on interim report provided to the Preparatory SA Workshop.
- vi. Participation by reviewer(s) in the Scientific Committee (and possibly the Preparatory SA Workshop) was seen to be possibly beneficial but would have additional cost implications.
- vii. In the selection of reviewers, the need to consider the independence and expertise of reviewers would need to be balanced against costs.
- viii. A range of options for selecting reviewers were noted. These included:

- a. CCMs
 - b. other RFMOs (e.g. IATTC)
 - c. the Center for Independent Experts - CIE is a group affiliated with the University of Miami that provides independent peer reviews of NMFS (USA) science nationwide, including reviews of stock assessments for fish and marine mammals
 - d. the Marine Resource Assessment Group (MRAG).
- ix. A recommendation on a specific reviewer is difficult to make at this time until the costs associated with each of these options are more fully understood. However, the SC saw much benefit in the independence of the selected reviewer.

2. SC5 noted that if the review of the OFP assessment was undertaken during 2010, there may be additional cost implications.