

## Confirmation of Assessment Tree

### Southern Gulf of California, Mexico Thread Herring Fishery

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#### *Confirmation of Modified MSC Assessment Tree, Interpretation, and Interpretive Guidance*

(based on the fishery being based on a low trophic stock complex of three thread herring species)

Having analyzed the characteristics of the fishery, SCS Global Services (SCS) proposed to use a modified MSC assessment tree including additions to the interpretation and interpretive guidance to account for the fishery being a low trophic level stock complex of three thread herring species. MSC Certification Requirements (CR v1.3, January 2013) is being used in the assessment of this fishery.

The Certification Requirements may be found by following the link below:

<http://www.msc.org/documents/scheme-documents/msc-scheme-requirements/msc-certification-requirements-v1.3/view>

Stakeholders were invited to provide comments on the suitability of the modified Assessment Tree for use in this fishery for a period of 30 days. No comments were received and the tree is now confirmed. The changes are in different colors depending on where the changes occur in MSC scheme documents: performance indicator tables versus text following tables (both considered binding portions of the certification requirements) or in Guidance to the Certification Requirements (not binding). Additional comments regarding this fishery may be sent to SCS at:

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In this system, the LRP(s) are calculated as a fraction of the TRP – this is specified in the management plan for small pelagics in the Gulf of CA, Mexico. Because of this, if there is a generic TRP, one or more LRPs calculated from this will all be the same fraction of the TRP. It should also be expected that similar reference points, based on fishing mortality, should be appropriate for all three species, as they have nearly identical life history traits/rates. However, there should be the ability to estimate separate catch limits by species, based on differences in the abundances of the three *Opisthonema* species. Assuring that stocks are harvested relative to their catch limits provides assurance that removals will not exceed biologically based limits.

We are proposing that the following be inserted in the corresponding sections of the **PI tables**, **interpretation of PI table requirements (CBxxx)** and **guidance (GCxxx)**.

Applicable to P1 overall. Change from “No requirements” to:

CB2.1 (p. C144 ) General requirements for Principle 1:

Addition: If the fishery is acting on a stock complex, every SI and SG in P1 needs to include a description about how it is being assessed and in case that catch policies are defined on the whole complex, how evidence is supporting the overall goal that “none of the component stocks are reduced below their limit reference point”.

PI 1.1.1 - Stock status PISGs. Addition: CB2.2.5.1 (p. C146) The stock complex and its components are at a level which maintains high productivity and that have a low probability of recruitment overfishing.

PI 1.1.2 - Reference points **Change: PI. Limit and target reference points are appropriate for the stock complex.**

PI 1.1.2 - Reference points Addition: CB2.3.8.1 (p. C149) If the fishery is acting on a stock complex, application of generic reference points need to be justified or specific reference points are to be set. A clear and detailed description is needed if one or more reference points are used to evaluate the whole stock complex and/or in cases where the components cannot be separated in the catch/landings; rationale shall be given demonstrating how inferences are made such that applying this TRP to the whole complex will achieve individual LRPs to keep each species component above biologically based limits.

PI 1.1.2 - Reference points Addition: GC2.3.8.1 (p. GC61) In the case of stock complexes, generic reference points may be set to work relevant to a collective set of components within a larger stock complex. For example, a target reference point can be set to keep fishing mortality around  $0.85F_{msy}$  for the whole stock complex; the rationale needs to explain how it is expected that applying this TRP to the whole complex will achieve individual LRPs for each component to fall under Blim.

PI 1.1.3 Stock Rebuilding **Change PI: Stock rebuilding : Where the stock complex or any component of the complex is depleted, there is an explicit rationale describing how changes in the harvest level intend to rebuild any depleted component of the complex, or the overall complex, within a specified timeframe.**

PIs 1.2.1 Harvest Strategy **Change: PI. There is a robust and precautionary harvest strategy in place that is applied to individual components or to the entire stock complex.**

PIs 1.2.1 Harvest Strategy Addition: CB2.5.3 (p.C159) The harvest strategy provides a rationale describing how it is expected that the aims and procedures are consistent with management goals that are stated for both the complex and components.

PIs 1.2.2 HCR and T Change: PI. There are well defined and effective HCR(s) designed and applied to individual components of the stock or the entire complex.

PIs 1.2.2 HCR and T Addition: CB2.6.2 (p.C160) The HCR(s) is/are provide(s) a rationale describing how it is expected that the aims and procedures are consistent with management goals that are stated for both the complex and components.

PI 1.2.3 Information and Monitoring Change: PI. Relevant information is collected to support the harvest strategy. In the case of stock complexes, the information must come from a statistical sampling program.

PI 1.2.4 Assessment of Stock Status Change: PI There is an adequate assessment of the stock status. In the case of stock complexes, status of component stocks is considered.