strategic due to a population decline may be designated as non-strategic if the decline is stopped and the stock is not otherwise strategic.”

And finally, to the draft revised guidelines include the following direction regarding recovery factors for declining stocks: “A stock that is strategic because, based on the best available scientific information, it is declining and is likely to be listed as a threatened species under the ESA within the foreseeable future (sec. 3(19)(B) of the MMPA) should use a recovery factor between 0.1 and 0.5.”

Assessing stocks without abundance estimates or PBR: For many stocks, data are so sparse that it is not possible to produce an Nₘₚₑₜ or therefore not possible to estimate PBR. When mortality and/or population abundance estimates are unavailable, the PBR approach cannot be used to assess populations, in spite of a statutory mandate to do so. The draft revised guidelines include the addition to the Status of Stocks section the following sentence: “Likewise, trend monitoring can help inform the process of determining strategic status.”

Characterizing uncertainty in key SAR elements: It is difficult to infer the overall uncertainty for key parameters as they are currently reported in the SARs. The draft revised guidelines direct that in the Stock Definition and Geographic Range, Elements of the PBR Formula, Population Trend, Annual Human-Caused Mortality and Serious Injury and Status of the Stock sections, SAR authors are to provide a description of key uncertainties associated with parameters in these sections and evaluate the effects of these uncertainties in sufficient detail to support a synthesis of how accurately stock status could be assessed.

Including non-serious injuries and disturbance in SARs: A final draft revision to the guidelines is the addition that if there are no known habitat issues or other factors causing a decline or impeding recovery, this should be stated in the Status of Stocks section.


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