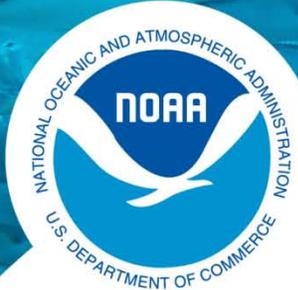




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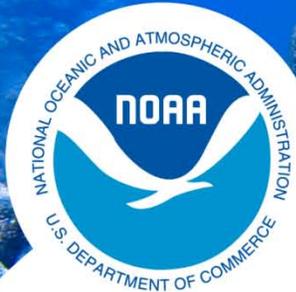
Guidelines on scientific information



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Overview and Process

The National Standard 2 (NS2) rule was developed to comply with provisions in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act (MSRA) of 2007 to improve scientific integrity of information used for the conservation and management of living marine resources.

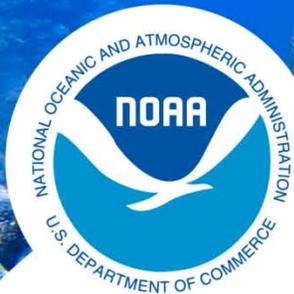


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Rule Content

National Standard 2 provides guidance on:

- What constitutes Best Scientific Information Available (BSIA),
- Scientific peer review standards,
- Role of Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC) in the review of scientific information,
- Purpose, content, and availability of Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) reports.



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Best Scientific Information Available

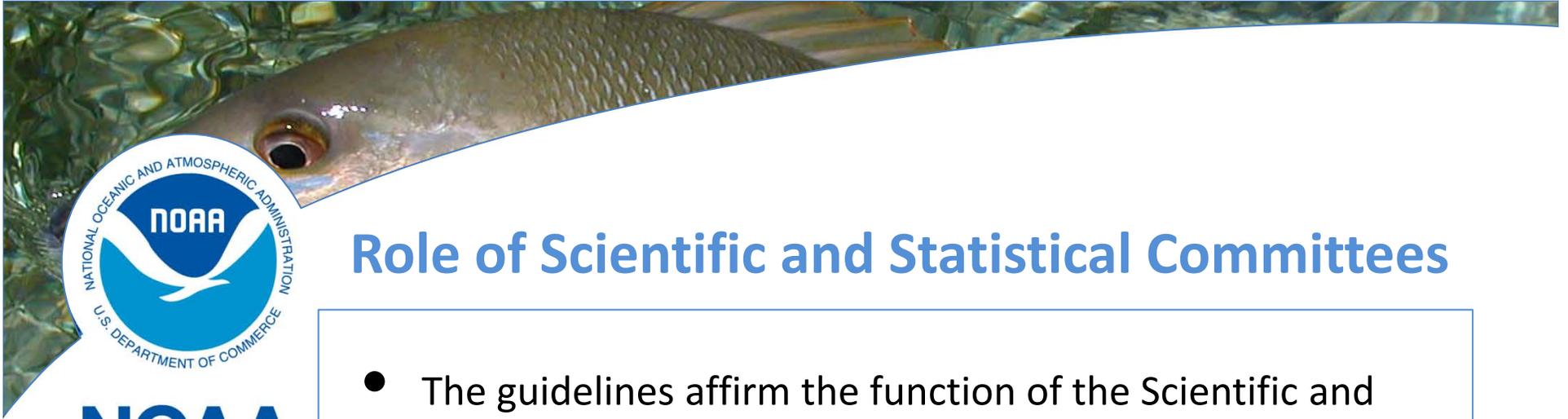
- We provide guidance on what constitutes the Best Scientific Information Available (BSIA) for improving fishery conservation and management.
- The 2004 National Research Council recommendations are adopted on the importance of relevance, inclusiveness, objectivity, transparency, timeliness, verification, validation, and peer review for BSIA.
- NS2 guidelines consider the definition of BSIA to be a dynamic process involving continuous improvements.



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Peer Review Standards

- The guidelines provide peer review standards, including reviewer selection criteria such as
 - Reviewers must abide by conflict of interest rules and
 - Must not have contributed to the development of the scientific information under review.
- The intent of the MSRA to provide the Secretary and Councils with the discretion to establish peer review processes is affirmed.
- MSRA peer review is now consistent with the Information Quality Act and the OMB Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.



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Role of Scientific and Statistical Committees

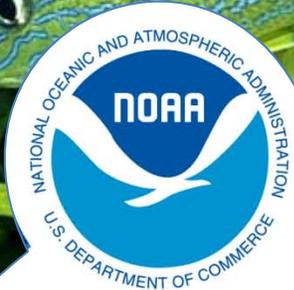
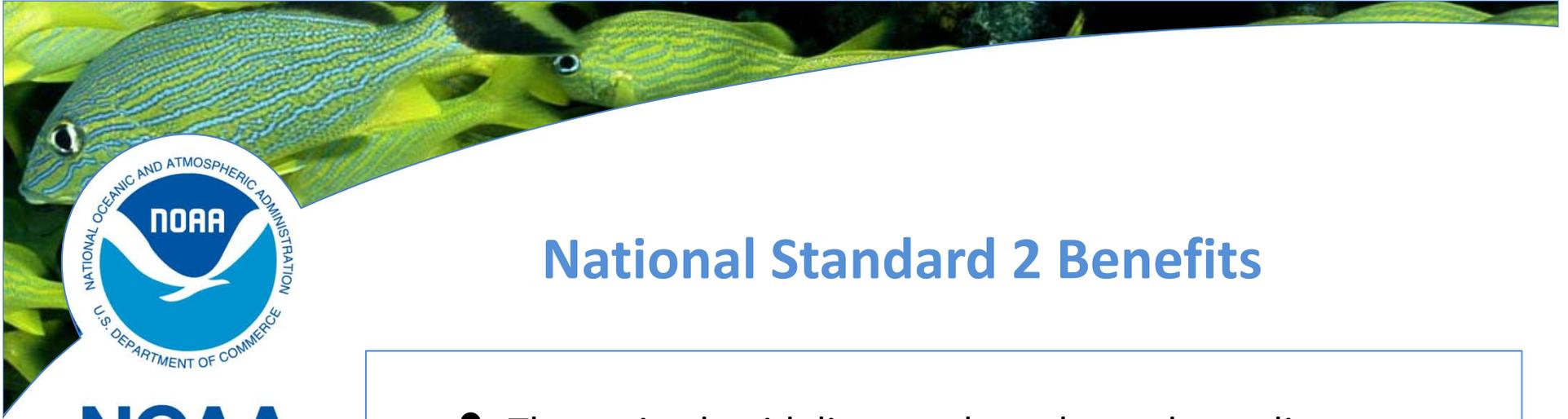
- The guidelines affirm the function of the Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSCs) is to evaluate scientific information and provide recommendations to their Councils.
- SSC's assistance in the peer review of scientific information is reaffirmed.
- Participation of an SSC member in a peer review should not impair the ability of that SSC member to accomplish their Council advisory responsibilities.
 - If SSCs members participate in a peer review, those SSCs members must meet peer reviewer selection criteria described in NS2 guidelines.



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Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Reports

- The guidelines emphasize the importance of the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report as the source of science information on managed fish stocks for the Secretary and the Councils.
- Clarification is provided on the purpose and content of SAFE reports.
- SAFE reports must be made publicly available via website by the Council or NMFS.



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National Standard 2 Benefits

- The revised guidelines make only modest adjustments to current operating practices.
- The guidance will align MSRA science with President Obama's and NOAA's scientific integrity policy.
- Formalizing these guidelines, including emphasizing the importance of transparency in the scientific review process, will strengthen the reliability and credibility of scientific information used by NOAA.
- This will improve public trust and benefit stakeholders.