

Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch®

Fisheries and Aquaculture Standards Review

Highlights of Final Revisions (2019-2020 cycle)

Introduction

The 2019-2020 standards revision cycle ran from February 2019 to February 2020, and a number of revisions were approved by the Multi-Stakeholder Group at their meeting on February 26 2020. The final revised standards were published in March 2020. This document provides a highlight of the changes, but readers are encouraged to review the track-changes versions of the revisions and the MSG Outcomes and Modifications for Approval document for more detail (all of these documents are under '2020 Multi-Stakeholder Group Meeting' at the bottom of the main standards revision webpage [here](#)).

Standard for Fisheries

- **C1**
Changes to the factors assessed in and scoring methodology of the PSA. Proposed changes will more closely align with the literature and help ensure that data poor fisheries do not score better than data rich fisheries
- **C1/C3/C4**
Changes to how we assess forage species. We acknowledge that static reference points are an inappropriate way to assess forage species and propose scoring their abundance using the PSA. We also propose changing the standard to emphasize the importance of precautionary research and management of forage species (C3) and the ecosystem impacts of forage species management (C4). These may include adding a critical category to C4.3 and/or introducing a decision rule where a high concern for forage species in factor 4.3 would cause Criterion 4 to be considered red for the purposes of calculating the overall rating of the SFW report.
- **C1**
Changes to how we assess data limited fisheries. After much consultation, we propose changing the requirement of 2 data-limited methods to one appropriate method with low uncertainty or several methods with higher uncertainty that point to the same result.
- **C2/C3**
Changes to how we assess fisheries that use bait. Bait species will be treated as bycatch if they meet the definition of a main species. This will ensure consistent application of the

standard regarding impacts on other species. We also adding language about management of bait fisheries to ensure that fisheries that are reliant on bait are sourcing it from well-managed fisheries that do not unduly impact marine resources.

- **C2**
Changes to the definition of substantial contributor: Proposed adding guidance on how to consider situations where fishing mortality has been greatly reduced and is a minor proportion of total mortality such that it is having minimal impact on a stock.

Standard for Salmonid Fisheries

Same as for the Standard for Fisheries above, with some minor modifications to harmonize some arbitrary values with the Marine Stewardship Council salmonid framework and to broaden the evidence that can be used to score the impact of artificial production on wild salmonid populations.

Standard for Aquaculture

- **C2/C3**
Modifying scope such that all effluent discharges from farms (including those from net pens) are now considered in Criterion 2 – Effluent, regardless of the distance from the farm their impacts may be observed. The intent of Criterion 2 is to assess the cumulative nutrient- or other effluent-related impacts of the industry under assessment on the waterbody/ies in which it is sited or that receive its effluent. Effluent discharges from net pens that impact the benthos within an allowable zone of effect (AZE) are currently considered in Criterion 3 – Habitat.
- **C2**
Inserted guidance for assessing polyculture (including multi-trophic) systems in the Risk-Based Assessment. The intent of this guidance is to ensure basic nutrient dynamics associated with multi-species systems can be accounted for in the calculation of likely impact from discharges of such systems. Guidance for polyculture has also been inserted into other criteria, as well as the scope of assessment in the standard’s introduction, but the most substantial change has been its incorporation into C2
- **C4**
Modified language for a score of 10 out of 10 to require that chemical treatments have not been used over 3 or more consecutive production cycles.
- **C4**
Modified language such that the use of antimicrobials critically important for human medicine in significant quantities (usually defined as more than once per production cycle) remains at a score of 0 out of 10, but the use of those products in unknown quantities is now considered a Critical conservation concern. A critical concern drives the overall rating to a red Avoid regardless of how the rest of the criteria are scored. Seeking public comment

on definition of a 'single treatment'

- C5
Significant restructuring/rescoping of the criterion:
 - *Factor 5.1*
Increasing the weighting of the sustainability of the source fisheries for marine ingredients, and proposing for discussion the inclusion of by-product fishmeal and fish oil in the calculation of FFER
 - *Factor 5.2*
Simplifying the 'protein budget' calculation to a simple "all protein in, all protein out"; this is in recognition of the incredibly complex determinations (as a result of often-conflicting ecological, economic, and social values) of the 'edibility' of ingredients used in aquafeeds.
 - *Factor 5.3*
The transition from a crude Earth-area-based metric to the utilization of a new, robust, and publicly- available life cycle assessment database to estimate the carbon intensity (via global warming potential, CO2 equivalents) of feed production on a per-ton of fish harvested basis.

- C9X
Restructured to allow for both Evidence-based and Risk-Based Assessment options, depending on data availability.