GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
EFFORTS TO REDUCE YELLOWTAIL ROCKFISH CATCH IN THE WHITING FISHERY:
REVIEW OF EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from representatives of onshore and
off-shore whiting fishermen and processors regarding actions proposed for 2000 to reduce rockfish
bycatch in the whiting fishery. The proposals would require a number of industry initiatives, in conjunction
with state permit requirements, to avoid and minimize rockfish bycatch, as required by law. The GAP
believes this program should be allowed to proceed and then analyzed at the end of the year to determine
its success.

The GAP notes the program will not apply to the early California whiting fishery, as that fishery has already
begun. Further, as noted by the Groundfish Management Team at the March 2000, Council meeting,
rockfish bycatch does not appear to be a significant problem in California. Finally, the GAP notes
comments made in March regarding operational difficulties with establishing this particular program in
California.

However, the GAP wishes to express its strong concern over the reported high levels of salmon and
rockfish bycatch in the tribal whiting fishery. These numbers are masked by NMFS’ insistence on
combining them with non-tribal mothership catches, which are much lower. The GAP urges the Council
to take whatever steps it can to reduce salmon and rockfish bycatch in the tribal whiting fishery.

PFMC
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