The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed a number of issues associated with implementation of the groundfish strategic plan and provides the following comments.

In regard to trawl permit stacking, a majority of the GAP believes the Council should move ahead with the effort and identify it as a priority above the Council’s “workload line.” Given the uncertainties associated with changes in the current Congressional moratorium on individual quotas and the bycatch reduction that can result from permit stacking, the GAP believes this suggestion is justified. However, none of the capacity reduction proposals being considered by the Council or the fishing industry will be truly effective until the Council fully resolves allocation issues among gear types and between commercial and recreational fishermen. A majority of the GAP, therefore, urges, as it has on numerous occasions previously, that the Council conclude the allocation process.

With regard to open access management procedures, the GAP has no recommendations at this time on particular approaches being considered. The GAP believes a better-fleshed out proposal is needed before comprehensive analysis can be provided. The GAP does note that the workload involved in dealing with this issue is substantial and advises that Council workload requirements and capabilities be analyzed before significant Council resources are devoted to this issue to the exclusion of other issues.

In regard to California near-shore management, the GAP appreciates the presentation given by Mr. Steve Wertz of the California Department of Fish and Game. A number of potentially contentious issues were discussed, including the impact of various options on establishing optimum yield levels, harvest allocation among gear types and between commercial and recreational fishermen, management of species which are found in the waters of more than one state and which may be caught in both federal and state waters, and the priority which would be accorded this issue in the context of Council workload. In general, the GAP believes California is moving too quickly on this issue, and several substantive questions need to be addressed. The GAP requests that a copy of the California management plan be forwarded to GAP members in sufficient time prior to the next Council meeting, where this issue will be addressed in order that the GAP can more clearly analyze options.