

Bob Alverson, FVOA
Public Comment, Thursday, B-6

Agenda Item B.6.c
Supplemental Public Comment

Update Research and Data Needs

Mr. Chairman:

The members of the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association fish approximately 42 tiered permits off the coast of Washington, Oregon and California for sablefish. During the 2005 harvest setting cycle, it became apparent that the Pacific Council is data poor relative to some of the population modeling for sablefish.

Specifically, it is apparent that there is a deficiency in aging sablefish in order to determine the present year's age makeup, but also to verify past year class strength. Members of FVOA met with members of NMFS and Washington Department of Fisheries earlier this spring and would like to thank both agencies for their time and assistance. NMFS observers have developed some new protocols to assist in aging fish on the North Coast and WDFG has offered to assist in starting a log book program.

We discussed a voluntary log book program for this summer and fall and though we will likely receive some compliance with this, it will be very much lacking in numbers. Therefore, FVOA request the Pacific Council to begin a regulatory action that would make it mandatory to have a log book for annual harvest in excess of 10,000 lbs. for the fixed-gear fleet. This should provide information for all the sablefish tiered activity as well as the directed fixed-gear dog fish fishery and other fixed groundfish deliveries. This information should help generate information for a number of species where the Council is data poor.

Currently, our members use the IPHC log book for their activities off the lower coast. We would support this as a good place to begin for a required log book design for fixed-gear activity.

As you know, this year the tiered sablefish program will begin to pay their IFQ fee to NMFS. This fee should generate about \$300,000. We would like some of these funds directed to aging sablefish and a fixed-gear log book program.