

PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Dear Reviewer:

The enclosed document – *Volume 1: Status of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Through 2002, Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation* (Volume 1 of the SAFE document)– provides individual stock assessments for four Pacific Coast groundfish species assessed in 2002, the associated Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel reports for each assessment, a Terms of Reference for 2002 STAR Panels, and rebuilding analyses for three of the species assessed in 2002 that have been declared overfished. The assessments and associated reports provided in this document include bocaccio, canary rockfish, sablefish, and Pacific whiting.

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) decided at its June 2002 meeting to conduct a new assessment of yelloweye rockfish this summer. While this new assessment and associated STAR Panel report will be available to the Council and the public prior to adoption of 2003 groundfish specifications and management measures, it will not be available for Volume 1 of the 2002 SAFE document. Likewise, a new draft of a bocaccio rebuilding analysis was prepared after the June Council meeting. The new draft comports to a methodological recommendation from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (see June 2002 SSC statement in this document). The previous version of the bocaccio rebuilding analysis is included in this volume of the SAFE document for the record. These documents will be included in Volume 1 of the 2003 SAFE document which will be available next summer.

Volume 2 of the 2002 SAFE document will contain the fishery catch data and other biological, management, and socioeconomic data references relevant to West Coast groundfish management. This will be published and distributed in the spring of 2003 and will include catch accountability data from the 2002 season.

Sincerely,



D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

JDD:rdh