

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
SABLEFISH ECOSYSTEM INDICATORS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a report from Drs. Melissa Haltuch and Nick Tolimieri of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), on progress made in evaluating potential ecosystem indicators that influence sablefish production and stock status.

The GAP appreciates the progress made on the project and sees value in the data and relationships to decrease uncertainty in sablefish stock assessments. We also see value in continuing this kind of work, especially because inclusion of oceanographic data could be informative about how sablefish, and other groundfish stocks, might respond to changing ocean conditions.

Sablefish is one of the most important stocks in the Pacific groundfish fishery management plan; it's also a transboundary stock, like several groundfish stocks. Similar information from Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center might also be informative. This kind of project may be useful for other transboundary groundfish stocks, such as Pacific ocean perch. As NMFS moves toward more ecosystem-based management and variable ocean conditions occur, an improved understanding of the underlying influence of ocean conditions on stock status should be informative to Council decision making.

However, the GAP also suggests the Council and NMFS provide guidance on the value of this work as future Federal budgets are in question.

PFMC  
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