

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON OFF-YEAR SCIENCE IMPROVEMENTS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a report from Mr. John DeVore, Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), on off-year science improvements and offers the following comments.

The GAP appreciates the compilation of science recommendations gathered from stock assessment reviews, PFMC advisory bodies, and workshops listed in [Attachment 1 under this agenda item](#). It is comprehensive and thorough.

In general, the GAP supports the recommendations as suggested by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The GAP has suggested workshops on historical catch reconstruction and productivity in the past and we appreciate that these have been done and are ongoing.

With that in mind, we support further effort on historical catch reconstruction, especially for cowcod, flatfish and skate species.

The SSC suggests a workshop on transboundary issues relating to groundfish. The GAP has supported that suggestion in the past and we anticipate this issue will remain prioritized. We recognize the complexity of getting Canadian Department of Fisheries and Ocean (DFO) scientists to attend, but having some DFO data to include for consideration in stock assessments is valuable. GAP members also suggest working with Mexico as much as possible relating to transboundary groundfish stocks – for example, lingcod.

The SSC also suggests a workshop on conditional age-at-length data be a priority. The GAP agrees, noting that composition data can significantly contribute to stock assessments.

Past GAP statements also have included a recommendation for surveys of Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs) using remotely operated vehicles or other methods. In 2015, we suggested this be removed from the priority list as some hook-and-line surveys have been done and that other surveys are in the works. We fully support any kind of survey that can access areas closed to fishing or non-trawlable areas to assess the stocks that aren't captured in trawl surveys. We also encourage innovative fishery-independent research and indices such as the consideration of extending the current Northwest Fisheries Science Center West Coast Groundfish Bottom Trawl survey into the CCA.

In summary, we suggest:

1. Continue historical catch reconstruction workshops, particularly for cowcod, flatfish and skates;
2. Workshops with Canada and Mexico on transboundary stocks;
3. Conditional age-at-length data workshop; and
4. Surveys of CCAs, nearshore areas and other non-trawlable or closed areas.