

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) was made aware of the Council Coordinating Committee (CCC) response letter to Oceana regarding their recently released report “Wasted Catch.” The GAP would like to take this opportunity to applaud the Pacific Council and the rest of the regional fishery management councils for their coordinated response to the misinformation printed in this nationally circulated report.

U.S. Federal fisheries are the most highly regulated fisheries in the world. Bycatch reduction is a primary objective for the regional councils and together we have made enormous strides on the west coast to reduce unwanted catch. In particular, the west coast groundfish industry (both commercial and recreational) has undergone significant changes in recent years in response to bycatch concerns – these changes have been at great cost to the industry both in terms of lost opportunity as well as in direct expenditures.

When misinformation is spread (on purpose or otherwise) by nationally recognized organizations it diminishes the hard work and sacrifices we in the industry and management communities have made. Our actions have demonstrated without a doubt that on the West Coast we are, in fact, responsible stewards of the ocean and its fishery resources. Similar dedication to bycatch reduction activities is occurring in all the other regions where the Councils operate.

If Oceana refuses to retract, correct and re-release the report in the ways suggested by the CCC letter then the GAP recommends that the Pacific Council encourage the CCC, in cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service, provide a media release which details the inaccuracies in the report as well as reiterates the harm caused to the nation’s fishing industry, coastal communities and management entities by publishing inaccurate and misleading information.

PFMC
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