

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON PACIFIC WHITING HARVEST  
SPECIFICATIONS FOR 2010

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from Mr. John Devore about the current whiting stock assessments, the Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel, and preliminary Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussions. We also heard from Mr. Tom Libby, the GAP advisor on the STAR Panel. The STAR Panel recommended using the TINSS model as the final preferred base model.

The GAP supports the STAR Panel's final preferred base model. This model estimates 2010 depletion at 37 percent. Based on this model, the GAP recommends a 2010 coastwide optimum yield (OY) of 339,000 mt. This harvest level is based on the three-year constant catch stream presented on Table E of Agenda Item E.3.a, Attachment 1 (Assessment and Management advice for Pacific hake in U.S. and Canadian waters in 2010, Martell 2010). This level of harvest is projected to result in a 2011 depletion of 31 percent, maintaining the stock well above the overfished threshold.

The 339,000 mt coastwide OY is a somewhat more conservative value than the 2010  $F_{MSY}$  catch projected by the base model (341,900 mt). As described in Martell 2010, the  $F_{MSY}$  policy seeks to maximize long-term sustainable yield and, thus,  $F_{MSY}$  harvest estimates are lower than  $F_{40\%}$  harvest estimates. Moreover,  $F_{MSY}$  is more conservative than the default Pacific Fishery Management Council and U.S./Canada Hake Agreement  $F_{40\%}$  harvest policies.

The GAP understands that work is underway to comprehensively review and update data used in the whiting assessment, including re-analysis of the acoustic survey data. The GAP supports this work and expects it to provide a clearer signal about the strength of 2005 and 2006 year classes.

Relative to this question of year class strength, current information appears to confirm past fishery and acoustic survey data. Specifically, "[t]he most recent length and age compositional data from the 2008-2009 U.S. fishery and the 2009 acoustic survey also indicate the presence of a relatively strong 2005 year class. Apparent also in 2009 is the emergence of another pronounced cohort at age 3 (the 2006 year class) and the continued presence of a small number of fish from the 1999 year-class, now age 10" (page 27, Agenda Item E.3.a, Attachment 2).