

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) REPORT ON THE ATLANTIS MODEL REVIEW

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) received a presentation from Dr. Isaac Kaplan of the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) regarding further developments and potential applications of the Atlantis ecosystem model platform, the California Current Atlantis Model (CCAM).

The GMT encourages the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) continued efforts to consider ecosystem dynamics in fisheries management. These efforts help inform the relationships among species which contribute to informed ecosystem management decisions. By gaining insights into these relationships, we can better understand the connectivity of the Council's four Fishery Management Plans and the Fishery Ecosystem Plan and how to best evaluate the risks and uncertainties associated with projected stock abundance and fishery impact analysis. The GMT encourages continued CCAM development and evaluation and notes the recent informative application for evaluating the long-term effects of setting groundfish harvest specifications in the Environmental Impact Statement prepared for 2015-2016 groundfish harvest specifications and management measures. The GMT emphasizes the value in continued updates from the NWFSC for the Council's advisory bodies on the progress of the model's development and potential future use for informing management decisions. The GMT is of the opinion that the value derived from future updates would be most productive by increasing dialogue and interaction for testing the model's applicability for informing future management decisions, such as spatial management decision making. Furthermore, there may be benefit in having a GMT representative available to attend further methodology reviews and ecosystem management discussions, and report directly back to the rest of the GMT.

In addition, the GMT supports the further development of the Atlantis model in evaluating climate change scenarios in the context of sustainable fisheries management strategies, particularly with ocean acidification as more data becomes available.

The GMT believes that the accuracy of the model could be improved by increased diet sampling and would be interested in exploring methods to increase sampling efforts, recognizing that there would be limited use of these diet sampling collections if the resources needed for their analysis could not be identified.

The GMT agrees with the Review Panel's conclusions that the model's use in support of Council decision making should be limited to qualitative, rather than quantitative management decision-making, given its current state of development.