

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON PROTECTING UNFISHED AND
UNMANAGED FORAGE FISH SPECIES INITIATIVE

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an overview from Mr. Corey Niles of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. GAP discussion was centered on information contained in the Ecosystem Initiative 1 (Agenda Item I.1.a, Attachment 1).

After reviewing the list of species, the GAP found it to be adequate for this stage of the process.

The GAP reviewed the range of two alternatives contained in the aforementioned document. The first is no action and the second contained three sub-options. Most of the ensuing discussion concerned the potential cost and benefit of the three sub-options for alternative #2.

The GAP offers the following recommendations and rationale.

Recommendations:

The GAP recommends adoption of alternative #1 (2.1) and the alternative #2 sub option, Ecosystem Trophic Role Pathway (2.2.1)

Rationale:

The GAP concludes that alternative #2 (2.2.1) provides adequate unfished forage fish protection with minimal potential disruption to existing fisheries. This sub-option would allow review of any new proposed fisheries by all of the advisory bodies through inclusion in their respective Fishery Management Plans. The GAP was advised that should unanticipated bycatch impacts of unfished forage species be realized, it would not result in enforcement actions nor constrain the affected fishery. Instead it would trigger a Council review. This advice was the major factor in support of this alternative.