

CONSIDERATIONS FOR IDENTIFYING GROUNDFISH MANAGEMENT MEASURE PRIORITIES

The following are some of the factors the Council may wish to consider when identifying groundfish management measure priorities.

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Magnuson Stevens Act National Standards

Section 301(a) of the MSA states: “Any fishery management plan prepared, and any regulation promulgated to implement any such plan, pursuant to this title shall be consistent with the following national standards for fishery conservation and management” The following are those national standards (NS):

- NS-1 Conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry.
- NS-2 Conservation and management measures shall be based upon the best scientific information available.
- NS-3 To the extent practicable, an individual stock of fish shall be managed as a unit throughout its range, and interrelated stocks of fish shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination.
- NS-4 Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate between residents of different States. If it becomes necessary to allocate or assign fishing privileges among various United States fishermen, such allocation shall be (A) fair and equitable to all such fishermen; (B) reasonably calculated to promote conservation; and (C) carried out in such manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privileges.
- NS-5 Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, consider efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources; except that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its sole purpose.
- NS-6 Conservation and management measures shall take into account and allow for variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches.

- NS-7 Conservation and management measures shall, where practicable, minimize costs and avoid unnecessary duplication.
- NS-8 Conservation and management measures shall, consistent with the conservation requirements of this Act (including the prevention of overfishing and rebuilding of overfished stocks), take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities by utilizing economic and social data that meet the requirements of paragraph (2), in order to (A) provide for the sustained participation of such communities, and (B) to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities.
- NS-9 Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, (A) minimize bycatch and (B) to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch.
- NS-10 Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, promote the safety of human life at sea.

The Council FMP Goals and Objectives

With respect to goals and objectives, the Council’s FMP reads as follows

Section 2.1 Goals and Objectives for Managing the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery

The Council is committed to developing long-range plans for managing the Washington, Oregon, and California groundfish fisheries that will promote a stable planning environment for the seafood industry, including marine recreation interests, and will maintain the health of the resource and environment. In developing allocation and harvesting systems, the Council will give consideration to maximizing economic benefits to the United States, consistent with resource stewardship responsibilities for the continuing welfare of the living marine resources. Thus, management must be flexible enough to meet changing social and economic needs of the fishery as well as to address fluctuations in the marine resources supporting the fishery. The following goals have been established in order of priority for managing the west coast groundfish fisheries, to be considered in conjunction with the national standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Management Goals

Goal 1 - Conservation. Prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks by managing for appropriate harvest levels and prevent, to the extent practicable, any net loss of the habitat of living marine resources.

Goal 2 - Economics. Maximize the value of the groundfish resource as a whole.

Goal 3 - Utilization. Within the constraints of overfished species rebuilding requirements, achieve the maximum biological yield of the overall groundfish fishery, promote year-round availability of quality seafood to the consumer, and promote recreational fishing opportunities.

Objectives. To accomplish these management goals, a number of objectives will be considered and followed as closely as practicable:

Conservation

Objective 1. Maintain an information flow on the status of the fishery and the fishery resource which allows for informed management decisions as the fishery occurs.

Objective 2. Adopt harvest specifications and management measures consistent with resource stewardship responsibilities for each groundfish species or species group. Achieve a level of harvest capacity in the fishery that is appropriate for a sustainable harvest and low discard rates, and which results in a fishery that is diverse, stable, and profitable. This reduced capacity should lead to more effective management for many other fishery problems.

Objective 3. For species or species groups that are overfished, develop a plan to rebuild the stock as soon as possible, taking into account the status and biology of the stock, the needs of fishing communities, recommendations by international organizations in which the United States participates, and the interaction of the overfished stock within the marine ecosystem.

Objective 4. Where conservation problems have been identified for non-groundfish species and the best scientific information shows that the groundfish fishery has a direct impact on the ability of that species to maintain its long-term reproductive health, the Council may consider establishing management measures to control the impacts of groundfish fishing on those species. Management measures may be imposed on the groundfish fishery to reduce fishing mortality of a non-groundfish species for documented conservation reasons. The action will be designed to minimize disruption of the groundfish fishery, in so far as consistent with the goal to minimize the bycatch of non-groundfish species, and will not preclude achievement of a quota, harvest guideline, or allocation of groundfish, if any, unless such action is required by other applicable law.

Objective 5. Describe and identify EFH, adverse impacts on EFH, and other actions to conserve and enhance EFH, and adopt management measures that minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts from fishing on EFH.

Economics

Objective 6. Within the constraints of the conservation goals and objectives of the FMP, attempt to achieve the greatest possible net economic benefit to the nation from the managed fisheries.

Objective 7. Identify those sectors of the groundfish fishery for which it is beneficial to promote year-round marketing opportunities and establish management policies that

extend those sectors fishing and marketing opportunities as long as practicable during the fishing year.

Objective 8. Gear restrictions to minimize the necessity for other management measures will be used whenever practicable. Encourage development of practicable gear restrictions intended to reduce regulatory and/or economic discards through gear research regulated by EFP.

Utilization

Objective 9. Develop management measures and policies that foster and encourage full utilization (harvesting and processing), in accordance with conservation goals, of the Pacific Coast groundfish resources by domestic fisheries.

Objective 10. Recognize the multispecies nature of the fishery and establish a concept of managing by species and gear or by groups of interrelated species.

Objective 11. Develop management programs that reduce regulations-induced discard and/or which reduce economic incentives to discard fish. Develop management measures that minimize bycatch to the extent practicable and, to the extent that bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch. Promote and support monitoring programs to improve estimates of total fishing-related mortality and bycatch, as well as those to improve other information necessary to determine the extent to which it is practicable to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality.

Social Factors.

Objective 12. When conservation actions are necessary to protect a stock or stock assemblage, attempt to develop management measures that will affect users equitably.

Objective 13. Minimize gear conflicts among resource users.

Objective 14. When considering alternative management measures to resolve an issue, choose the measure that best accomplishes the change with the least disruption of current domestic fishing practices, marketing procedures, and the environment.

Objective 15. Avoid unnecessary adverse impacts on small entities.

Objective 16. Consider the importance of groundfish resources to fishing communities, provide for the sustained participation of fishing communities, and minimize adverse economic impacts on fishing communities to the extent practicable.

Objective 17. Promote the safety of human life at sea.

[Amended; 7, 11, 13, 16-1, 18, 16-4]

Trawl Rationalization Goals and Objectives (Amendment 20)

Trawl Rationalization goals and objectives from Amendment 20 are as follows.

Goal

Create and implement a capacity rationalization plan that increases net economic benefits, creates individual economic stability, provides for full utilization of the trawl sector allocation, considers environmental impacts, and achieves individual accountability of catch and bycatch.

Objectives

The above goal is supported by the following objectives:

1. Provide a mechanism for total catch accounting.
2. Provide for a viable, profitable, and efficient groundfish fishery.
3. Promote practices that reduce bycatch and discard mortality and minimize ecological impacts.
4. Increase operational flexibility.
5. Minimize adverse effects from an IFQ program on fishing communities and other fisheries to the extent practical.
6. Promote measurable economic and employment benefits through the seafood catching, processing, distribution elements, and support sectors of the industry.
7. Provide quality product for the consumer.
8. Increase safety in the fishery.

Constraints and Guiding Principles

The above goals and objectives should be achieved while the following occurs:

1. Take into account the biological structure of the stocks including, but not limited to, populations and genetics.
2. Take into account the need to ensure that the total OYs and allowable biological catch (ABC) are not exceeded.
3. Minimize negative impacts resulting from localized concentrations of fishing effort.
4. Account for total groundfish mortality.
5. Avoid provisions where the primary intent is a change in marketing power balance between harvesting and processing sectors.
6. Avoid excessive quota concentration.
7. Provide efficient and effective monitoring and enforcement.
8. Design a responsive mechanism for program review, evaluation, and modification.
9. Take into account the management and administrative costs of implementing and oversee the IFQ or co-op program and complementary catch monitoring programs, as well as the limited state and Federal resources available.

Sablefish Permit Stacking Program (Amendment 14)

Key objectives of Amendment 14 and the permit stacking program were further defined as follows.

Key Objective	Consistency with Management Objectives of the FMP and MSA
1. Rationalize the fleet and promote efficiency	Capacity reduction is one of the key elements of the Council's strategic plan. The strategic plan generally approaches capacity reduction by reducing the number of fishing vessels. This reduction does not of itself imply the rationalization of the fleet or increased efficiency. It is possible that the most efficient fixed gear sablefish harvest could involve a greater number of vessels taking sablefish as bycatch in other fisheries. However, given the high degree of overcapitalization in the fishery, it is believed that a reduction in capacity will generally move the fishery toward greater efficiency, addressing National Standard (NS) 5 and FMP Objective 6 on net national benefits.
2. Maintain or direct benefits toward fishing communities	This objective relates to NS 8 on fishing communities and FMP Objective 16 on fishing communities.
3. Prevent excessive concentration of harvest privileges	This objective relates to NS 4 on allocation, NS 8 on fishing communities, and FMP Objective 15 on avoiding adverse impacts to small entities.
4. Mitigate the reallocational effects of recent policies (3-tier system and equal limits)	This objective relates to NS 4 on allocation and FMP Objectives 12 on equitable allocation and 14 on minimizing disruption.
5. Promote equity	This objective relates to NS 4 on allocation and FMP Objective 12 on equitable sharing.
6. Resolve or prevent new allocation issues from arising	This objective relates to NS 4 on allocation and FMP Objectives 12 on equitable sharing and 14 on minimizing disruption.
7. Promote safety	This objective relates to NS 10 and FMP Objective 17 on safety.
8. Improve product quality and value	This objective relates to NS 5 on efficiency and FMP Objective 6 on net national benefits.
9. Take action without creating substantial new disruptive effects.	This objective relates to FMP Objective 14 on minimizing disruption.
10. Create a program that will readily transition to a multi-month IQ program.	This objective relates to capacity reduction recommendations in the strategic plan. Where individual quotas are transferable and divisible, they address NS 6 by providing the fleet with substantial flexibility to respond to changing conditions in the fishery and NS 5 by taking efficiency into account. FMP Objective 6 is also addressed.

Groundfish Strategic Plan From 2000

The following pages contain the groundfish strategic plan from the year 2000.

**Pacific Fishery Management Council
Groundfish Fishery
Strategic Plan**

“Transition to Sustainability”

Executive Summary

Prepared by

**The Ad-Hoc Pacific Groundfish Fishery
Strategic Plan Development Committee**

For

The Pacific Fishery Management Council

October 2000

Statement of Purpose and Acknowledgments

The Ad-Hoc Pacific Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan Development Committee was formed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council and tasked with the development of a Draft Groundfish Strategic Plan for review and comment by the Council, its Advisory Entities, and the Public.

The members of the Ad-Hoc Committee were selected from the Council membership or as a Council member's designee.

This draft document was prepared through a consensus decision-making process and is the work-product of all members of the Committee.

The Groundfish Strategic Plan Document is *not* proposed as a Fishery Management Plan amendment. Rather, the purpose of the Groundfish Strategic Plan is to guide the future management of the Groundfish Fishery, including development of Plan amendments, regulations, and other implementation actions as needed.

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**Pacific Fishery Management Council
Groundfish Fishery
Strategic Plan**

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**The Pacific Fishery Management Council
Pacific Groundfish Fishery
Strategic Plan**

Executive Summary

I. The Strategic Plan Overview – “Where Do We Want To Go?”

A. Context and Need for Strategic Planning in the Groundfish Fishery

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) formed the Groundfish Strategic Planning Committee because it needed an advisory group that could work outside of the hectic Council meetings to craft a long-term vision for the future of groundfish fisheries and groundfish management. Several groundfish stocks are severely depleted and need strong protective management to rebuild. Commercial and recreational discards are not monitored, and those discards have unknown effects on the health of groundfish stocks. There is little information about the effects of fishing and non-fishing activities on groundfish habitat. Scientific efforts to assess the status of groundfish stocks, life histories, and habitat needs have been grossly underfunded.

The groundfish resource is cannot support the number of vessels now catching and landing groundfish. There are over 2,000 licensed West Coast commercial fishers, and many thousands of sport fishers. To bring harvest capacity in line with resource productivity, the number of vessels in most fishery sectors will have to be reduced by at least 50%. Coastal ports have significant shoreside infrastructures to support this once-prosperous industry, such as processing plants, boat yards, machine shops, marine supply stores, motels, and restaurants. Fishing fleet overcapitalization has been a major factor in fish stock depletion, and the industry and coastal communities are facing an economic and social crisis.

This strategic plan is intended to provide guidance for groundfish management in 2001 and beyond. It is intended to be a resource for Council efforts to rebuild depleted stocks and maintain healthy stocks. And, it is intended to guide Council efforts to reduce the size of the fishing fleet to a level that is both biologically sustainable for the resource and economically sustainable for the fishing fleet.

The Committee expects that, to be effective, this strategic plan will have to address the difficult issues of: reducing fishing capacity, setting more responsible harvest rates, making allocation decisions, meeting scientific needs, protecting habitat, and improving the Council management processes. This planning work will take place during a time when fishery restrictions will be used to rebuild overfished stocks. These conditions provide the clearest evidence of the need for a longer-term vision and road map for the future of groundfish management.

The Committee designed a process and schedule to get key information, identify specific problems and develop a range of solutions. The Committee has developed a draft strategic plan document for Council and public review that:

- § Recommends new management goals and objectives;
- § Initiates new groundfish plan amendments for the 2001 management cycle;
- § Outlines detailed actions for Council work plans and a schedule of priorities for the next 3-5 years; and
- § Develops specific recommendations for other entities to address that will complement the Council's needed management changes; such recommendations may propose changes in law, calls for budget support, and expectations for improving coordination between industry, government and educational institutions.

B. Vision For The Future Of The Groundfish Fishery

The Strategic Plan's vision for the future of the groundfish fishery assumes that the Plan's recommended actions are fully implemented with passage of sufficient time for the anticipated benefits to have been fully realized. The Plan's drafters recognize that the transition to this future will require major changes in the structure and operation of the fishery, which will certainly have short-term adverse effects on current participants. The plan envisions that fishery management decisions are based on sound scientific data and analysis and an open and fair Council process.

1. The Fishery

We envision a future where Pacific groundfish stocks will be healthy, resilient, and where substantial progress has been made rebuilding overfished stocks. Harvest policies will result in total fishery removals that are consistent with the long-term sustainability of the resource. The fishing industry will be substantially reduced in numbers and harvest capacity will be reduced to a level that is in balance with the economic value of the available resource. Those remaining in the fishery will operate in an environment that is diverse, stable, market-driven, profitable, and adaptive over a range of ocean conditions and stock sizes.

Unlimited or open access to the groundfish fishery will no longer exist because current open access participants will be brought into the limited entry program and the number of participants reduced to those who are most dependent on and committed to the fishery.

Whenever possible, management approaches will create incentives for fishers to operate in ways that are consistent with management goals and objectives.

Allocation disputes will be resolved and all harvest sectors will believe they were treated fairly, including those non-groundfish fisheries where groundfish is an unavoidable incidental catch. Discarded bycatch by all gear groups will be minimal and quantified.

Fishery regulations will be less complex and more easily enforced. Council management may be simplified by removing some species from the FMP through delegation or deferral to state management.

Essential groundfish habitat will be adequately protected and adverse effects from all groundfish fishing gears will be reduced to minimal levels. Marine reserves, or no take zones, will provide a base level of protection as an insurance policy to reduce the risks of uncertain science and long stock rebuilding periods.

The improved operating conditions and profitability for those remaining in the fishery will allow participants to accept responsibility for a portion of the cost of effective science and management, including an at-sea observer program, that is commensurate with the level of benefits associated with exclusive access to the fishery.

Finally, the Council will have full access to all fishery management tools and will use them to provide protection for and reasonable access to groundfish stocks.

2. The Science

The basis for future management of the groundfish fishery relies to a very large degree on the availability of good science. West Coast groundfish science will meet national and international standards, be accepted as credible and will be understood by the all stakeholders. Scientific data collection will be a collaborative process involving partnerships between federal, state, and tribal agencies, the fishing industry, and academia, and may include contributions from private foundations.

Data collection and monitoring programs will provide stock assessments with acceptable levels of uncertainty for use by the Council's scientific, management, and advisory committees. Scientific data collected from the fishery will provide the capability to accurately assess the effects of current and potential fishery management measures on groundfish stocks and fishery participants. Finally, scientific tools will have been developed to provide stock assessments throughout the distribution of the various groundfish stocks geographic ranges incorporating the variability and effects of ocean regime shifts.

3. The Council

Future Council activities will be characterized as open to all stakeholders, inclusive of all views, credible and interactive. Council actions will be documented and easily understood and developed with meaningful involvement by the public, including environmental, commercial and recreational representatives. Council decisions will be documented with readily available explanation and analysis of the underlying biological and socio-economic considerations. Council advisory entities will work together to contribute advice and expertise that results in

recommendations that are accepted by stakeholders. Regulations development will be simplified and streamlined. Regulations will be generally stable over multi-year periods, but there will be flexibility to respond quickly when changes are needed.

C. Consequences of Inaction

There is another vision from that presented above. The Council could continue attempting to manage an overcapitalized fleet in the face of declining resource abundance and the necessity to meet stock rebuilding requirements. This will most certainly result in shorter fishing seasons, smaller trip limits, higher discard rates, and the continuous inability to accurately account for fishery-related mortalities. Many fishers will not be able to meet their basic financial responsibilities and will be forced from the fishery by a feeling of futility or bankruptcy. The Council and participating agencies will be overwhelmed by the need to implement short term fixes to long term problems with little or no chance to focus on the underlying problems of the fishery or to develop a long term management strategy.

To avoid this other vision of the future, the Council will have to act swiftly and soon. The Council has a choice in charting the future of the groundfish fishery. Decisions that the Council makes now will have profound effects for years to come.

II. The Strategic Plan “What Will We Do To Get There?”

A. Groundfish Fishery Management

1. Overall Fishery Management Concerns

Strategic Plan Goal For Management Policies

To adopt understandable, enforceable, and stable regulations that, to the greatest extent possible, meet the FMP’s goals and objectives and the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Management Policies Recommendations

These recommendations assume that the objective of maintaining year-round harvesting and processing opportunity remains the Council's highest social and economic priority. In that case, it is imperative that Recommendation 1 for capacity reduction be implemented as rapidly as possible. If substantial harvest capacity reductions are not possible or are delayed, the Council must consider several of the alternative strategies for restructuring the fishery to restrict access by some portion of the fishing fleet for major periods.

In the event that none of the recommended measures or alternatives are viable or effective, the Council may have to shorten the annual fishing season. The Strategic Planning Committee cannot emphasize strongly enough the need for some level of observer coverage to evaluate the effectiveness of different management strategies.

1. Develop an implementation plan to reduce capacity initially by at least 50% in each sector. However, the capacity reduction goal will not be fully realized until capacity has been reduced to a level that is in balance with the economic value of the resource and those remaining in the fishery are able to operate profitably and flexibly. The implementation plan should take into account the need to implement other Plan recommendations (i.e., allocations, nearshore rockfish delegation) prior to or at the same time as capacity reduction. Reducing capacity will relieve the need to adopt management policies that are both inefficient and ineffective at achieving the FMP's goals and objectives. By better matching fleet capacity to resource availability, the regulatory structure will become more stable, resulting in regulations that are more enforceable.
2. Explore the use of higher landing limits or other incentives to encourage fisherman to fish with bycatch friendly fishing gear or to fish in areas where bycatch is less likely.
3. Make the necessary allocation decisions so that fishery participants in each sector can plan on a specific share of future OY's. Allocations may be outright percentages or a framework with criteria that specify how the allocation changes as resource availability changes.
4. Consider delegating or deferring nearshore rockfish and other groundfish species, such as scorpionfish, greenling, and cabezon, to the States.
5. All commercial fisheries should be limited through state and/or federal license or permit programs.

2. Harvest Policies

Strategic Plan Goal for Harvest Policies

To establish an allowable level of catch that prevents overfishing while achieving optimum yield based on best available science.

Harvest Policies Recommendations

1. In consideration of the uncertainties in the estimation of ABCs, set optimum yields (OYs) lower than the ABC, manage the fishery to a fixed OY(s), and close the fisheries when the OY is reached.
2. Harvest levels must be increasingly precautionary when less biological information is available, and particularly if monitoring programs fail to provide reliable estimates of total fishery-related mortality. Consider a hierarchal approach, where increased levels of conservatism would be required based on the specific quantity and quality of biological and fisheries information that is available.

3. For unassessed stocks, set precautionary harvest levels based on simple parameters such as a fixed proportion of the mean catch or survey abundance, or as a function of the lowest rate allowed for an assessed stock.
4. To protect weak stocks harvested in multi-species fisheries, adopt a policy requiring closure of the fishery when the ABC or OY of the weak stock has been taken. In setting the OYs, determine whether benefit/cost considerations might justify overfishing a particular weak stock under the mixed-stock exception in the National Standard Guidelines. Do not knowingly allow harvest rates that drive the stock below the level defined in the FMP as "overfished" or to a condition warranting listing under the ESA.
5. Without an international agreement on setting and sharing the total allowable catch for trans-boundary stocks, the Council should conserve that portion of the stock within the geographic range of its authority.

3. Capacity Reduction

Strategic Plan Goal for Capacity Reduction

To have a level of harvest capacity in the fishery that is appropriate for a sustainable harvest and low discard rates, and which results in a fishery that is diverse, stable, and profitable. This reduced capacity should lead to more effective management for many other fishery problems. For the short term, adjust harvest capacity to a level consistent with the allowable harvest levels for the 2000 fishing year, under the assumption that stock rebuilding will require reduced harvests for at least the next two decades. Maintaining a year-round fishery may not be a short-term priority.

Capacity Reduction Recommendations

The highest priority for reducing capacity is Recommendation #1 from the Management Policy section. That recommendation is to develop an implementation plan to reduce capacity initially by at least 50% in each sector. As noted earlier, the capacity reduction goal will not be fully realized until capacity has been reduced to a level that is in balance with the economic value of the resource and those remaining in the fishery are able to operate profitably and flexibly. In designing capacity reduction, the Council should consider fleet structure, profile, and diversity, with a goal of maintaining a mix of small and large vessels.

The capacity reduction plan should take into account the need to implement other strategic plan recommendations (i.e., allocations, nearshore rockfish delegation) prior to or at the same time as capacity reduction. Reducing capacity will relieve the need to adopt management policies that are both inefficient and ineffective at achieving the FMP's goals and objectives. By better matching fleet capacity to resource availability, the regulatory structure will become more stable, resulting in regulations that are more enforceable.

These capacity reduction recommendations include both the short and long-term and transitional elements discussed below, such as license-limitation (for the targeted open access fishery), permit stacking, and IFQs either individually or in combination with a vessel buyback program.

Short to Intermediate Term

1. Separate the current open access fishery into a sector that directly targets groundfish and a sector that lands groundfish as bycatch in non-groundfish fisheries. Require current open access vessels that directly target groundfish to obtain a federal limited entry permit (B permit) based on historical landings and current participation. Minimum landing requirements for a federal permit should reflect significant dependence on the fishery. Consider developing and implementing a voluntary permit stacking program for the B permit. Require a federal permit ("C" permit) to land groundfish taken incidentally in non-groundfish fisheries.
2. Divide the current open access allocation into separate allocations for the "B" and "C" permit holders and manage each sector to stay within its allocation each year.
3. Consider using historical landings only from 1994-1999 and recent participation from either 1998 or 1999 for initially qualifying B permit holders.
4. For the limited entry fixed gear fishery, immediately develop and implement a voluntary permit stacking program with the intent of transitioning to an IFQ program to provide for a multiple month season. The Permit Stacking allowance should be implemented prior to the 2001 regular sablefish season. Stacked permits should **NOT** allow increased access to the daily sablefish trip limit. Simultaneously, develop an IFQ system for fixed-gear sablefish for implementation in 2002. If Congress continues to prohibit IFQ programs, consider making the permit-stacking program mandatory.
5. For the limited entry trawl fleet, immediately develop and implement a voluntary permit-stacking program that links each permit with a cumulative period landing limit with the intent to transition to an IFQ program. The first, or base permit should be entitled to a full period landing limit, while each stacked permit should entitle the vessel to additional landing limits on a discounted basis as one alternative. Another alternative is to have the full period landing limit the same for all permits. If Congress continues to prohibit IFQ programs, consider making the permit-stacking program mandatory.
6. To prevent future overcapacity in the whiting fishery, consider developing and implementing a whiting species endorsement that restricts future participation in the whiting fishery to vessels registered to a permit with a whiting endorsement. Qualification for a whiting endorsement should be based on a permit's whiting landings since 1994 when the current limited entry program began. Consider setting a threshold quantity of whiting above which a whiting endorsement is required for a landing. Individual landings below the threshold would not require an endorsement.
7. Pursue a buyback program to remove latent capacity.

Intermediate to Long Term

8. Develop of a comprehensive IFQ program for the limited entry trawl fishery, or in the alternative, a mandatory permit-stacking program.
9. Consider establishing a rockfish endorsement for the limited entry fixed gear fleet and open access (B permit) fleet. Qualifying criteria would be based on historical landings and recent participation.
10. Consider access limitation for commercial passenger fishing vessels. (This program may be better managed by the states.)

4. Allocation of Groundfish Resources

Strategic Plan Goal for Allocation

To distribute the harvestable surplus among competing interests in a way that resolves allocation issues on a long-term basis.

Allocation Recommendations

General Allocation Principles

1. All fishing sectors and gear types will contribute to achieving conservation goals (no sector will be held harmless). The fair and equitable standard will be applied to all allocation decisions but is not interpreted to mean exactly proportional impacts or benefits.
2. Non-groundfish fisheries that take groundfish incidentally should receive only the minimal groundfish allocations needed to efficiently harvest their target (non-groundfish) species. To determine the amount of allocation required, identify the economic values and benefits associated with the non-groundfish species. Directed fishery harvest of some groundfish may need to be restricted to incidental levels to maintain the non-groundfish fishery. Consider gear modification in the non-groundfish fishery to minimize its incidental harvest.
3. Modify directed rockfish gears, as needed, to improve their ability to target healthy groundfish species and avoid or reduce mortality of weak groundfish species.
4. When information on total removals by gear type becomes available, consider discards in all allocations between sectors and/or gear types. Each sector will then receive adjustments for discard before allocation shares are distributed.
5. Fairly distribute community economic impacts and the benefits and costs of allocation coast-wide. Allocations should attempt to avoid concentration and assure reasonable

access to nearby resources. Consider the diversity of local and regional fisheries, community dependency on marine resources and processing capacity, and infrastructure in allocation decisions.

6. Consider impacts to habitat and recovery of overfished stocks or endangered species (dependent on affected habitats) when making allocation changes.
7. Allocation decisions should consider and attempt to minimize transfer of effort into other fishery sectors, particularly for state managed fisheries (crab and shrimp).
8. Allocation decisions will: (a) consider ability to meet increased administrative or management costs; and (b) be made if reasonably accurate in-season quota monitoring or annual catch accounting has been established or can be assured to be established and be effective.
9. As the tribe(s) expand their participation in groundfish fisheries, allocations of certain groundfish species may have to be specified for tribal use. In such cases, the Council should ask the affected parties to U.S. v. Washington to convene and develop an allocation recommendation.

Area Management as Related to Allocation

10. Structure allocations considering both the north-south geographic *and* nearshore, shelf and slope distributions of species and their accessibility by various sectors and gears.
11. In addressing recreational/commercial rockfish allocation issues, use the following fishery priorities by species group: for nearshore rockfish, states may recommend a recreational preference, with any excess to be made available for commercial use; for shelf rockfish, the Council may set a recreational preference only on a species-by-species basis; and for slope rockfish, commercial allocation.
12. Licenses, endorsements or quotas established through management or capacity reduction measures may be limited to specific areas through exclusive area registrations and consider port landing requirements.

5. Observer Program for Quantifying Bycatch, Total Catch, and Total Fishery-Related Mortality

Strategic Plan Goal for an Observer Program

To quantify the amount and species of fish caught by the various gears in the groundfish fishery and account for total fishery-related removals.

Observer Program Recommendations

1. Immediately implement an at-sea groundfish observer program, with determination of total groundfish catch and mortality as the first priority, consistent with established Council priorities.
2. Consider the following options to fund an observer program:
 - a) Seek federal/state funding;
 - b) Continue to support legislative change to provide authority to collect fees from the fishing fleet to support the observer program;
 - c) If federal/state or industry funding is not available, make individual vessels responsible for providing some level of observer coverage as a condition of participation in the fishery.
3. Even with limited funding, both trawl and non-trawl fleets should have some meaningful, but not necessarily the same, level of observer coverage. Determine which harvesting sector(s) will receive the initial observers.
4. Consider alternative monitoring approaches that augment an observer program, including logbooks and video.
5. When an effective observer program has been established, a full retention strategy may be considered to reduce discard and improve biological information collection.
6. As a secondary priority, an observer program should collect additional data for stock assessments. For example, the North Pacific Council requires its observers to dedicate a small portion of the working day to taking otoliths and length measurements, in order to supplement information on the age and size distribution of particular species.

6. Marine Reserves as a Groundfish Management Tool

Strategic Plan Goal for Marine Reserves

To use marine reserves as a fishery management tool that contributes to groundfish conservation and management goals, has measurable effects, and is integrated with other fishery management approaches.

Marine Reserves Recommendations

1. Adopt marine reserves as a fishery management tool for Pacific groundfish and proceed with implementation, as appropriate.
2. Identify the specific objectives that marine reserves are expected to meet.

3. Develop siting and design criteria, including the size of the reserve, that will meet specified marine reserve objectives. Analyze options for establishing reserves that include nearshore, shelf, and slope habitat.
4. Adopt final siting criteria, including reserve size and location, and proceed with implementation and evaluation as quickly as possible, to ensure compatibility with other management changes.
5. Direct the Scientific and Statistical Committee to recommend new methodologies for continued stock assessments and for establishing harvest levels outside the reserves following the implementation of reserves.

7. Groundfish Habitat

Strategic Plan Goal for Pacific Groundfish Habitat

To protect, maintain, and/or recover those habitats necessary for healthy fish populations and the productivity of those habitats.

Pacific Groundfish Habitat Recommendations

1. Consider regulatory changes (including incentive systems) that result in modification or elimination of fishing gears or fishing practices that are determined to adversely affect EFH areas of concern such as nearshore and shelf rock-reef habitats.
2. Develop and implement gear performance standards for hook and line, pot, set gillnet, and trawl to increase gear selectivity, protect habitat, and/or decrease ghost fishing by lost gear.
3. Promote scientific research on the effects of fishing gear on various habitats.
4. Promote research to modify existing gear and practices to provide practical, economically viable alternatives to fishing gear that adversely affects habitats.
5. Identify habitats necessary for healthy fish populations and identify locations of those habitats.

B. Science, Data Collection, Monitoring, and Analysis

Strategic Plan Goal for Science, Data Collection, Monitoring, and Analysis

To provide comprehensive, objective, reproducible, and credible information in an understandable and timely manner to meet our conservation and management objectives.

Science Recommendations

1. Prioritize stock assessments for suspected “weak stocks” in mixed-stock fisheries.
2. Create cooperative partnerships between state, federal, private foundations, and other private entities to collect and analyze the scientific data needed to manage groundfish.
3. Promote improved mutual understanding, communication and credibility between the fishing industry and scientists through increased communication and collaboration, including at-sea ride-alongs.
4. Develop methods for incorporating fisher observations into stock assessment and monitoring programs, including employing commercial fishing vessels to conduct cooperative resource surveys and to collect other scientific data.
5. Implement the Council’s draft West Coast Fisheries Economic Data Plan.
6. Ensure that economists and social scientists are adequately included on Council plan teams and ad hoc committees where appropriate, to ensure that all dimensions of management issues, options, and solutions are well reflected in their input to the Council.
7. Hold an annual or bi-annual meeting of U.S./Canada and/or U.S./Mexico stock assessment scientists to plan upcoming (preferably joint) assessments of transboundary stocks. The U.S./Canada portion of this recommendation could be conducted under the umbrella of the existing U.S./Canada Groundfish Technical Subcommittee.
8. Meet annually with National Marine Fisheries Service’s Northwest and Southwest Regions and Science Centers and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to integrate the Council’s data and research needs into NOAA’s budget process.
9. Meet with the states and NMFS to develop a joint multi-year research and data collection/analysis plan for west coast groundfish.
10. Direct scientific efforts to measure the changes in groundfish productivity due to ocean environmental changes.
11. Obtain a dedicated research vessel(s) to perform annual surveys and collect other data needed to manage the coastwide groundfish under Council jurisdiction.

C. Council Process and Effective Public Involvement During and Beyond the Transition

Strategic Plan Goals for Council Process

- § *To establish and maintain a management process that is transparent, participatory, understandable, accessible, consistent, effective, credible, and adaptable;*
- § *To provide a public forum that can respond in a timely way to the needs of the resource and to the communities and individuals who depend on them; and*

§ *To establish a long-term view with clear, measurable goals and objectives.*

Council Process Recommendations

1. Encourage long term thinking so the Council can suggest creative solutions to Congress and NMFS during the Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization process.
2. Establish a performance evaluation committee to periodically and critically review progress made towards Council goals and objectives. The committee should also analyze improvements needed in Council procedures to maintain efficiency.
3. Update goals and objectives in the FMP to incorporate the strategic plan's vision and goals. These updated goals and objectives should: (a) be measurable, (b) have minimal conflicts, and (c) be clearly prioritized wherever possible.
4. Continue to routinely update its mailing lists and ensure that they contain commercial and recreational fishing associations, conservation and environmental groups, commercial licensed fishers for groundfish and other fishery species, local port offices, media contacts, and community-based organizations.
5. More effectively use newsletters, web page displays, public forums, news releases, and public service announcements to improve public participation in Council activities and decisions.
6. Make draft agendas available earlier to the local media from fishing communities, highlighting key issues.
7. Sponsor workshops to explain the Council process, its role and responsibility relative to fishery management, the roles of its committees and advisory entities, and the various opportunities for public involvement. Workshops should be held by the Council and state agencies in local port communities.

III. "How Will We Measure Success?" Implementing and Updating the Strategic Plan

A. Proposed Implementation Process

Implementing the Strategic Plan Recommendations

1. At the September 2000 Council meeting, the Council adopts the Final Groundfish Strategic Plan document (per revisions incorporated after the summer public comment phase).
2. The Council directs the formation of a "Groundfish Strategic Plan Implementation Oversight Committee" which should be composed of Council members, some of which will have been members of the Strategic Plan Development Committee, to ensure continuity and an effective transition to implementation.

3. At its discretion, the Implementation Oversight Committee may establish small implementation development teams to develop specific alternative(s) for implementing elements of the Strategic Plan. Implementation development teams will be comprised of Council subpanel, management team, and committee members from the GMT, GAP, SSC, EC, and members of the public as deemed necessary by the Implementation Oversight Committee.
4. The Implementation Oversight Committee works at direction of the Council and is tasked with making recommendations regarding implementation of the strategic plan.
5. The Implementation Oversight Committee **goals** should include: (a) effective transition to the implementation phase, (b) ensuring the plan is implemented in a timely fashion, and (c) whenever possible, doing so in a fashion that provides for constituent acceptance and buy-in.
6. At the direction of the Council, the Implementation Oversight Committee will develop recommended schedules for carrying out all components of the strategic plan.
7. The Implementation Oversight Committee will develop recommendations for all components of the strategic plan that can be developed further: (a) directly by the Council, (b) via advisory entity assignments, or (c) through formation and use of a implementation development team approach, e.g., capacity reduction implementation development team(s), which would handle all of the complexities of addressing the implementation of capacity reduction. For example, there might be four teams – with industry representatives from trawl, fixed gear, open access with groundfish target, and open access with non-groundfish target. Each of these teams will also have a representative from the Implementation Oversight Committee, with a charge to develop a plan and product by “x” date. The Implementation Oversight Committee considers the work of the implementation development teams and develops the final recommendations for the Council. Clarification, input, and technical support will be available to all teams with “on-call” availability from Council staff, states, NMFS staff and General Counsel, etc.
8. It will be important to consider current conditions in the groundfish fishery, including the effects of recent changes in resource status, fishery management, and the environment, as part of the strategic plan implementation process.

B. Measuring Success

Options for Updating the Groundfish Strategic Plan Document

A good strategic plan is rigid enough to have clearly-stated, expected results but also flexible enough to modify when evaluation indicates change is necessary. The Council wishes to maximize the value of the time, energy, and money invested in its strategic plan by regularly evaluating the plan's effectiveness and initiating changes as deemed necessary to enhance

success. The Council also recognizes that periodic review provides plan continuity for Council members and staff, and promotes public awareness.

Updating The Strategic Plan Recommendations

The Council should schedule a routine review every five years. If a Council member determines that a review should occur more frequently, the member could seek to have the review placed on the Council agenda in the same manner that other actions are placed on the agenda. When the review takes place, the Council should follow the standard Council meeting process and take written and oral public comment, and involve the appropriate advisory entities.