

STATEMENT OF THE GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL ON
STOCK ASSESSMENT PRIORITIES FOR 2000

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) has the following comments on the stock assessment priority list forwarded by the Groundfish Management Team.

Given the availability of new data and controversies over previous assessments, the GAP believes top priority should be given to assessments on yellowtail rockfish and ling cod (coastwide). As discussed in comments on an earlier agenda item, the GAP also believes that a stock assessment review (STAR) panel is necessary for reviewing proposed changes in harvest policy and fishing mortality levels.

The GAP believes assessments for Dover sole and English sole can be deferred until 2001 or beyond.

On a more general note, the GAP again expressed its concern that candidates for stock assessments are sometimes not based on the availability of data or the needs of conservation and management, but rather on what a particular stock assessment author wants to do. The GAP is fully supportive of the STAR process and believes it should continue. However, that process is weakened if priorities are based on individual scientific interest rather than Council decisions.

The GAP also suggests that - in setting priorities - the Council consider the availability of data to produce a meaningful assessment. With this in mind, the GAP encourages state agencies and NMFS to begin collecting data well in advance of when it will be needed, so the data base available to stock assessment authors is usable.

PFMC
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