

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON  
BYCATCH MORTALITY FOR ROCKFISH

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed Groundfish Management Team (GMT) Report G.5.(1). on bycatch and incidental catch of rockfish. SSC discussion focused, in particular, on the GMT's difficulty in estimating rockfish discards for the year 2000. The SSC recognizes the difficulties in estimating discards generally and the additional complications arising from creation of the new minor rockfish management categories prior to the 2000 fishery.

The GMT Report G.5. suggests a number of ad-hoc approaches designed to provide rough estimates of discards for the 2000 fishery. The SSC encourages the GMT to further explore these approaches. Although all such approaches are less than ideal, they may result in discard estimates preferable to the default assumption that no discarding occurred. The SSC is willing to review these estimates if adequate documentation of the methods can be provided. The GMT's opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches would also be helpful. However, the Council should recognize that such ad-hoc estimates cannot be supported over the long term. The SSC endorses the GMT statement that "... continued absence of a comprehensive, total catch monitoring program is a serious defect in the current management program."

PFMC  
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