

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON  
GROUND FISH HARVEST RATE POLICY

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met jointly with the Groundfish Management Team and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to receive a presentation on the results of the Harvest Rate Policy Workshop conducted by the SSC. The GAP has the following comments on the workshop report:

1. Precautionary Approach

As recommended in the report, the GAP believes any precautionary reductions in harvest should be made as part of the annual specifications establishing optimum yields. The harvest rates recommended in the report are risk-neutral; variations from those rates should follow the normal management process.

2. Phase-In of Harvest Rates

The report suggests new harvest rates be phased in to prevent sudden adverse social and economic effects. The GAP agrees and suggests that stock assessment authors be asked to calculate  $F_{MSY}$  rates when completing new stock assessments or updates. These rates would then be applied to the species/ complexes in question. Since stock assessments are conducted on a rotating basis, this allows the new harvest rates to come into effect with the adoption of the new assessments.

3. Further Research

Papers were presented at the workshop which discussed regime shifts and predator/prey relationships. The workshop report also raised questions about the calculation of  $B_0$ . The GAP believes all of these topics deserve additional research scrutiny.

PFMC  
04/04/00