

**PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
DRAFT GROUND FISH FISHERY
STRATEGIC PLAN**

“TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABILITY”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

For
**Council Family
Review and Comment**

June 2000

**PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
DRAFT GROUND FISH FISHERY STRATEGIC PLAN**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	PAGE
I. The Strategic Plan Overview “Where Do We Want to Go?”	
A. Context and Need for Strategic Planning	
1. Need Statement.....	1
B. Vision for the Future of the Groundfish Fishery	
1. The Fishery.....	2
2. The Science.....	3
3. The Council.....	4
II. The Strategic Plan- “What Will We Do to Get There?”	
A. Groundfish Fishery Management	
1. Management Policies	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	5
b. Recommendations	5
2. Harvest Policies	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	6
b. Recommendations	6
3. Capacity Reduction	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	7
b. Recommendations	7
4. Allocation	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	9
b. Recommendations	9
5. Observer Program	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	12
b. Recommendations	12
6. Marine Reserves	

a. Strategic Plan Goal	13
b. Recommendations	13
7. Groundfish Habitat	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	14
b. Recommendations	14
B. Science, Data Collection, Monitoring and Analysis	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	14
b. Recommendations	14
C. Council Process, Organization, And Effective Public Involvement During and Beyond The Transition	
a. Strategic Plan Goal	16
b. Recommendations	16
 Implementing the Strategic Plan – “How Will We Implement the Plan And Measure Success?”	
1. Options for Updating the Groundfish Strategic Plan Document	
a. Recommendation	17

THE PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL PACIFIC GROUND FISH FISHERY STRATEGIC PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. THE STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW- “WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?”

A. NEED FOR GROUND FISH STRATEGIC PLANNING

The economic hardship and uncertainty being experienced by the industry is intensifying competition among fishery sectors for access to the resource. Individual fishers, communities and competing groups have become more polarized and information needs have increased. Protecting groundfish stocks while ensuring that the burden of conservation measures is distributed equitably among sectors of the fishery is becoming increasingly difficult to accomplish. Even if groundfish OYs were to increase significantly (an unlikely scenario), the latent capacity in the fishery will be mobilized at any sign of improved fishing opportunities. The current problems associated with low landings limits; short seasons and complex regulations will not go away unless latent capacity is permanently removed from the fishery.

The Council has responded to these problems by trying to deal with individual issues on an ad-hoc basis. This short-term approach has been increasingly characterized by crisis management.

Participants in the West Coast Groundfish Fishery are aware of the wide range of difficulties in the fisheries and their management. Traditional fishery resources have declined, competition for the limited resources has increased, and information and management needs have grown. Future goals and directions have been questioned and become uncertain. Recent changes to the national standards for fishery management have created new management requirements that must be fulfilled and implemented by the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

For these reasons, the Council decided to initiate a strategic planning process to attempt to look beyond the short term or ad-hoc approach to setting seasons and catch limits. Consequently, the Council appointed an Ad-Hoc Pacific Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan Development Committee. The task of the Committee has been to guide a strategic plan development process to address future conditions and the associated management requirements.

The Committee expects that, to be effective, this strategic plan will have to address the difficult issues of reducing fishing capacity, more responsible

harvest rates, allocation, science, habitat and the Council management processes. It is recognized that this planning work will also be occurring during a time when fishery restrictions will be implemented in order to rebuild overfished stocks. These conditions provide the clearest evidence of the need for a longer-term vision and road map of specific actions to carry out a strategic transition.

The Committee designed a process and schedule to obtain 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 will:

1. Recommend new management goals and objectives;
2. Lead immediately to new groundfish plan amendments by the November 2000 cycle;
3. Outline additional detailed actions for Council work plans and a schedule of priorities for the next 3-5 years; and
4. Develop specific recommendations for other entities to address that will compliment the Council's needed management changes; such recommendations may propose changes in law, calls for budget support, and expectations for enhancing coordination activities between industry, government and educational institutions.

B. VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GROUND FISH 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 the future envisioned by the plan will require major changes in the structure and operation of the fishery which will certainly have short-term adverse impacts to 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 are healthy, resilient, and substantial progress has been made rebuilding overfished stocks. Harvest policies result in total fishery removals that are consistent with the long-term sustainability of the resource. The fishing industry is substantially reduced in numbers and harvest capacity is reduced to a level that is in balance with the economic value of the available resource. Those remaining in the fishery are able to 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 as current open access participants are brought into the limited entry program and the number of participants reduced to those who are most dependent and committed to the fishery.

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

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

Under future fishery management regimes, essential groundfish habitat is adequately protected and adverse impacts from all groundfish fishing gears are reduced to minimal levels. Marine reserves, or no take zones, provide a baseline 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 allows participants to accept responsibility for a portion of the cost of providing effective science and management, including an at-sea observer program, that is commensurate with the level of benefits that exclusive access to the fishery provides.

Finally, the Council has full access to all fishery management tools and uses 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. The scientific basis for management will meet national and international standards, be accepted as credible and is understood by the stakeholders that are affected by Council decisions. Scientific data collection takes place in a collaborative process involving partnerships between federal and State agencies, the fishing industry, and potentially includes contributions from private foundations.

Data collection and monitoring programs 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 impacts of current and potential

fishery management measures on groundfish stocks and fishery participants. Finally, we envision scientific tools have been developed that provide stock assessments throughout the distribution of the various groundfish stocks geographic range 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 are documented and easily understood and developed with meaningful involvement by the public including environmental, commercial and recreational representatives. Council decisions are documented with readily available explanation and analysis of the underlying biological and socio-economic considerations. Council advisory entities work together to contribute advice and expertise that results in recommendations that are accepted by stakeholders. The development of regulations is simplified and streamlined. Regulations are generally stable over multi-year periods, but there is flexibility to respond quickly when changes are needed.

II. THE STRATEGIC PLAN “WHAT WILL WE DO TO GET THERE?”

A. GROUND FISH FISHERY MANAGEMENT



1. FISHERY MANAGEMENT POLICIES

(a) 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.

(b) Management Policies Recommendations

The following 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, capacity reduction, be fully implemented as rapidly as possible. If substantial reductions in harvest capacity are not possible or are significantly delayed, the Council should consider several of the alternative strategies for restructuring the fishery that restrict access by some portion of the fishing fleet for major time periods (platooning).

In the event that none of the recommended measures or alternatives are viable or effective, the Council may have little choice but 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 potential effectiveness of different management strategies.

1. Proceed with the reduction of harvest overcapacity as quickly as possible. Reduced 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 which will result in regulations that are more enforceable. This recommendation includes both the short and long-term and transitional elements discussed in the overcapacity section of the plan such as license-limitation (for the targeted open access fishery), permit stacking, and IFQs either individually or in combination or in combination with a vessel buy-back program.
2. Continue to explore the use of higher landing limits as an incentive to fish with bycatch friendly fishing gear or to fish in areas where bycatch is reduced.

3. Make the necessary allocation decisions so that fishery participants 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. To reduce management complexity, consider delegating or deferring nearshore rockfish and other groundfish species, such as scorpionfish, greenling and cabezon, to the States.



2. HARVEST POLICIES

(a) 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.

(b) Harvest Policies Recommendations

1. In light of the uncertainties in the estimation of ABCs, harvest guidelines (OYs) should be set lower than the ABC, the fishery should be managed to a fixed OY(s), and fisheries should be closed when the OY is reached.
2. Harvest levels must be increasingly precautionary as the biological information base decreases, and particularly if monitoring programs fail to provide reliable estimates of total fishery-related mortality. The Council could consider a hierarchical 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, the Council should set conservative 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, the Council should adopt a policy requiring closure of the fishery when the total allowable catch of the weak stock has been taken. In developing the policy, the Council must determine whether the policy should include an exception where benefit/cost considerations might justify overfishing a particular weak stock under the mixed-stock exception contained in the National Standard Guidelines, or whether the policy is to close the fishery when the ABC or OY is taken without exception. Under no circumstances

can the Council 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. For more precise estimation of stock abundance and responsible management of harvest guidelines, an observer program is essential.
6. Without an international agreement on setting and sharing the total allowable catch for trans-boundary stocks, each nation should conserve that portion of the stock within the geographic range of its authority.
7. Marine reserves can be used to guard against management uncertainty and enhance productivity, but should be considered on their own broader merits rather than solely as a function of the Council's harvest policy.



3. CAPACITY REDUCTION

(a) Strategic Plan Goal for Capacity Reduction

The Council's long-term goal for capacity reduction is to set the harvest capacity in the fishery at a level that is appropriate for a sustainable resource and results in a fishery that is diverse, stable and profitable. In the short term, a realistic goal is to 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.

Any capacity reduction program should also attempt to achieve a level of capacity that contributes to management effectiveness and that contributes to controlling total fishing mortality by reducing bycatch. The Council desires to reduce capacity to a level that would continue to support a year-round fishery, but maintaining a year-round fishery is not a short-term priority.

(b) Capacity Reduction Recommendations

Short to Intermediate Term

1. For the limited entry fixed-gear fishery, begin immediately to 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, the Council should

begin to develop an IFQ system for fixed-gear sablefish for implementation in 2002. If the Council continues to be precluded by Congress from implementing an IFQ program, it may want to consider making the permit-stacking program mandatory.

2. For the limited entry trawl fleet, begin immediately to develop and implement a voluntary permit-stacking program that links each permit with a cumulative period landing limit. 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.
3. The whiting fishery capacity generally matches current resource availability. In order to prevent overcapacity in the future, the Council should consider developing and implementing a whiting species endorsement that restricts future participation in the whiting fishery to those 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. The Council also may want to consider establishing 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.
4. The Council and the trawl industry should continue to pursue a buy-back program. In the event that an IFQ program for the fixed-gear sector is not possible, consideration should be given to including fixed-gear in any buy-back program.
5. 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. For example, the Council should consider 1,000 lbs. of groundfish in any qualifying year as one alternative. Require a federal permit (C permit) to land groundfish taken incidentally in non-groundfish fisheries. There may be no limit on the number of permits.
6. The Council should 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.

Intermediate to Long Term

1. Begin development of a comprehensive IFQ program for the limited entry trawl fishery, or in the alternative, a mandatory permit-stacking program.
2. Resolve allocation issues between recreational and commercial sectors and commercial fixed-gear and trawl sectors.



4. ALLOCATION OF GROUND FISH RESOURCES

(a) 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.

(b) 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. To provide flexibility in changing allocations as part of a stock rebuilding plan, the "Rebuilding Plan" plan amendment proposes to establish a provision for suspending the allocation shares between the limited entry and open access sectors.
2. Access should be limited in all commercial fisheries through state and/or federal license, or permit programs. Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel limited access programs should also be considered by the respective states.
3. Non-groundfish fisheries that take groundfish incidentally should receive only the minimal groundfish allocations needed to efficiently harvest their target (non-groundfish) species. In determining the amount of allocation required, the Council will identify the economic values and benefits associated with the non-groundfish species and may eliminate directed fishery harvest of groundfish when needed to maintain the non-groundfish fishery. At the same time, the Council may require gear modification in the non-groundfish fishery to minimize its incidental harvest.

4. Directed rockfish gears will be modified as needed to improve their ability to target healthy groundfish species, and avoid or reduce mortality of weak groundfish species.
5. When an observer program is available and provides reliable information on total removals, discards will be considered in all allocations between sectors and/or gear types. Each sector will then receive adjustments for discard before allocation shares are distributed.
6. Community economic impacts and the benefits and costs of allocation should be fairly distributed coast-wide. Allocations should attempt to avoid concentration and assure reasonable access to nearby resources. The diversity of local and regional fisheries, community dependency on marine resources and in processing capacity, and infrastructure will be considered in Council allocation decisions.
7. Council changes to allocations between sectors and/or gears within sectors should not encourage or result in increased capitalization (investment) and capacity (need or ability to increase harvest).
8. Impacts to habitat and recovery of overfished stocks or endangered species (dependent on impacted habitats) will be considered when allocation changes are made.
9. Council capacity reduction measures will consider and attempt to minimize transfer of effort into other fishery sectors potentially complicating allocation issues for Council managed fisheries, and particularly for state managed fisheries (crab and shrimp).
10. All Council allocations 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.
11. As the tribe(s) expand their participation in groundfish fisheries, the Council may need to specify an allocation of certain groundfish species for tribal use. In such cases, the Council should request the affected parties to U.S. v. Washington to convene and develop an allocation recommendation for review and consideration through the Council process.

Area Management as Related to Allocation

1. Allocations will be structured considering both the north-south geographic *and* nearshore, shelf and slope distributions of species and their accessibility by various sectors and gears.

(a) North-South and Coastwide Distribution Considerations- geographic management areas may be created considering the following factors:

- Species distribution
- Traditional reliance on fishing grounds and species
- State recreational fishery preferences
- Weather and oceanographic conditions
- Port distribution
- Management and enforcement needs, and legal constraints (such as tribal allocations)
- Subdivision of groundfish statistical areas to support area allocation of harvest amounts

(b) Nearshore, Shelf and Slope Considerations

2. The respective coastal states are encouraged to address commercial and recreational allocation issues in a timely manner, particularly when there is a preference for recreational use. In ways similar to the approaches developed through the allocation processes for salmon and halibut, each state is responsible for involving its constituents in a process of option development and review and action by the Council.
3. The following Council framework for commercial/recreational allocation anticipates a state recreational preference to address the principle nearshore species with any excess available for commercial use determined annually. In shelf areas, a recreational preference would occur only on a species-by-species basis set by the Council. In slope areas, the Council preference is for commercial allocation.
4. When insufficient fish are available to allow even minimal allocations to both commercial (incidental and directed) and the recreational sectors the Council may allocate the available resource to recreational use when
 - i. the economic benefits and values of the recreational fishery exceed the loss to the commercial fisheries affected; and
 - ii. bycatch mortality for the species addressed in the allocation is fully accounted for in both fishery sectors.

5. Licenses, endorsements or quotas established through management or capacity reduction measures may be limited to specific areas through exclusive area registrations and port landing requirements.

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



(a) 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.

(b) Observer Program Recommendations

1. Immediately implement a groundfish observer program, with determination of total groundfish catch and mortality as the first priority.
2. Consider the following options in implementing an observer program:
 - a. With federal, state and/or industry funding, implement the Council's pilot observer program, with three to four port coordinators who would coordinate observer placement based on priorities approved by the Council;
 - b. 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. Given the likelihood of limited funding, focus the observer program on specific tasks. The Council may need to prioritize coverages, i.e. focus on collecting total mortality data for overfished groundfish stocks as an initial observer program priority.
4. Even with limited funding, both trawl and non-trawl fleets should have some meaningful, but not necessarily the same, level of observer coverage. The Council will need to determine which harvesting sector will receive the initial observers. The criteria for choosing specific vessels for observer coverage will need to be established.
5. For vessels that are unable to carry an observer, the Council should

consider different monitoring approaches.

6. As a secondary priority, an observer program should supplement the collection of 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 Pacific Groundfish Fishery



Management Tool

(a) Strategic Plan Goal for Marine Reserves

To utilize 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.

(b) Marine Reserves Recommendations

1. Adopt marine reserves as a fishery management tool for Pacific groundfish and proceed with implementation.
2. Identify the specific objectives that marine reserves are expected to meet.
3. Develop siting and design criteria, including the size of the reserve, which will meet these objectives. Analyze options for establishing reserves that set aside 5%, 10% and 20% of 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 minimize this transition in groundfish management.
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. Pacific Groundfish Habitat

(a) 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.

(b) Pacific Groundfish Habitat Recommendations

1. The Council should consider either prohibiting or modifying any fishing gear or fishing practice determined to adversely impact EFH areas of concern such as nearshore and shelf rock-reef habitats.
2. Review and revise where necessary gear performance standards for hook and line, pot, set gillnet, and trawl to decrease ghost fishing by lost gear and to increase gear selectivity.
3. Establish no-take marine reserves to help rebuild stocks with limited recruitment.
4. Promote scientific research on the impacts of fishing gear on various habitat types and the feasibility of habitat restoration.
5. Promote research to modify existing gear and practices to provide practical, economically viable alternatives to destructive fishing gear.

B. SCIENCE, DATA COLLECTION, MONITORING AND ANALYSIS

(a) 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.

(b) Science Recommendations

1. Identify and complete stock assessments for the suspected “weakest stock” in mixed-stock fisheries by gear type.
2. Obtain a dedicated research vessel(s) to perform annual surveys and collect other data needed to manage the coastwide groundfish under Council jurisdiction.

3. Create cooperative partnerships between state, federal, private foundations, and other private entities to collect and analyze the scientific data needed to manage groundfish.
4. Promote improved understanding, communication and mutual credibility between the fishing industry and scientists through increased communication and collaboration including at-sea ride-alongs.
5. Update the Council's Research and Data Needs document to reflect the current priority needs of groundfish management.
6. Develop methods for incorporating fishermen's observations into stock assessment and monitoring programs.
7. Implement the Council's draft West Coast Fisheries Economic Data Plan.
8. Insure that economists are adequately included on Council plan teams and ad hoc committees where appropriate.
9. 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.
10. The Council should 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.
11. The states, NMFS, and Council should meet and develop a joint multi-year research and data collection/analysis plan for west coast groundfish.
12. Scientific efforts should be directed to measure the changes in groundfish productivity due to ocean environmental changes.

C. COUNCIL PROCESS AND EFFECTIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DURING AND BEYOND THE TRANSITION

(a) Strategic Plan Goals for Council Process

1. To establish and maintain a management process that is transparent, participatory, understandable, accessible, consistent, effective, credible, and adaptable;
2. 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
3. To establish a long-term view with clear, measurable goals and objectives.

(b) Council Process Recommendations

1. Encourage long term thinking so the Council can suggest creative solutions to Congress and NMFS during the reauthorization process
2. Establish a committee, with a designated staff person, to maintain a list of possible Magnuson-Stevens Act changes to be presented upon request of Congress and NMFS
3. Seek NEPA / Regulatory Flexibility Act exemption during the next Congressional reauthorization
4. The Council should establish a performance evaluation committee to periodically and critically review progress being made towards Council goals and objectives. The committee should also analyze improvements needed in Council procedures to maintain efficiency.
5. Adopt goals and objectives that are: (a) measurable, (b) have minimal conflicts, and (c) clearly prioritized where possible.
6. The Council should 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.
7. More effectively utilize newsletters, web page displays, public forums, news releases and public service announcements to improve public participation in Council activities and decisions.
8. Make draft agendas available earlier to the local media from fishing communities, with key issues highlighted.
9. The Council should 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 as an annual evening session during a Council meeting and by state agencies in local port communities.

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

(a) Updating The Strategic Plan Recommendation

1. The Council should schedule a routine review every five years (Option b3). If a Council member determines 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 (Option c1).