GROUNDFISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
REBUILDING PROGRAMS FOR CANARY ROCKFISH AND COWCOD

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met jointly with the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to review rebuilding plans for cowcod and canary rockfish. The GAP also was briefed by staff of the California Department of Fish and Game on regulatory proposals which the department intends to make to the Council at this meeting. This report comments briefly on the rebuilding plans and more extensively on the proposed California management measures. The GAP notes it will be increasingly important to monitor discards in all sectors of the fishery.

CANARY ROCKFISH

The options available for rebuilding are dependent on assumptions about recent recruitment. Projections based on the 1998 triennial trawl survey indicate a more optimistic view of canary stocks, which could lead to a higher optimum yield (OY) for 2001 than projections not using the 1998 survey point. In either case, the results of the 2001 triennial trawl survey will provide additional information to determine whether or not an optimistic approach is justified.

The Council needs to be aware of the trade-off involved: if the optimistic approach is used now and the 2001 survey confirms this projection, then substantial pain can be avoided. If the 2001 survey shows canary at a low level, then additional restrictions will need to be put in place in 2002.

On the other hand, if the pessimistic approach is used now, restrictions will begin immediately. If the 2001 survey confirms the optimistic approach, the fisheries will have endured this pain unnecessarily. If the 2001 survey confirms the pessimistic approach, then the Council will have acted properly.

COWCOD
The GAP agrees with the GMT decision to recommend the medium biomass estimate as the basis for rebuilding cowcod. However, the GAP has concerns on how rebuilding progress - both for this species and in general - will be monitored, especially if management measures call for zero retention of a species.

PFMC
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