

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL COMMENTS
ON 2001 GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT MEASURES

After receiving direction from the Council, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) held several joint meetings with the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) to develop management measures for the 2001 groundfish season.

For the sake of brevity, I will not repeat all of the proposals advanced by the GMT, as we are in agreement on most of them. I will identify where there are areas of disagreement or additions to the GMT statement:

Cowcod area closure south of Conception

While the GAP fully supports the protection of cowcod stocks, the extensive area closure to all groundfish fishing is unnecessary and will have severe economic impacts on both commercial and recreational fisheries. We recommend that the Council adopt the option identified as Option 2 on Supplemental GMT Report 2 under this agenda item, with the proviso that boats taking advantage of this opportunity carry observers or provide other effective means of verification. While the GAP understands the enforcement concerns identified, we believe that some means can be found to resolve them if all parties are willing to work cooperatively and think creatively.

California recreational management, central area

The majority of the GAP supports a recreational option calling for a March through June closure on the shelf and a March and April closure near shore (with a parallel closure of commercial fixed gear), resulting in a sport impact on near shore minor rockfish of 550 metric tons, a limited entry fixed gear impact of 30 metric tons (landed catch), and an open access impact of 74 metric tons.

A minority of the GAP supports a recreational option calling for a March through June closure of both shelf and near shore (with a parallel closure of commercial fixed gear) resulting in a recreational impact of 500 metric tons, a limited entry fixed gear impact of 30 metric tons (landed catch) and an open access impact of 120 metric tons.

Sablefish minimum size

The GAP supports removing the 22" sablefish minimum size requirement for all limited entry gear in order to reduce discards of small sablefish.

Platooning

The GAP supports continuation of the platooning option for limited entry trawl vessels. For vessels in the "B" platoon, the final period will be November 16, 2001 to December 31, 2001, with the same trip limits as the "A" platoon has for the November 1 to December 31 period.

PFMC
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