

EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Situation: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will conduct its annual survey of the continental slope groundfish resources this summer, using private commercial vessels as research platforms. NMFS may compensate these vessels for their participation in research activities by setting aside amounts of groundfish for them to harvest after their research activities have been completed. These amounts are in addition to any trip limits that may be in effect. An exempted fishing permit (EFP) is necessary to allow these vessels to take these compensation fish. The EFP specifies the amount of fish and conditions for compensation fishing. NMFS will present its estimates of the quantities and species of fish to be made available for compensating the vessels. The amounts of fish actually caught will be deducted from the 2002 acceptable biological catch levels when the Council addresses this issue in November 2001

NMFS may also discuss an EFP to allow vessels that carry state or federal biologists to take small amounts of fish that will be used for specific research and data collection projects, such as depth-specific size and distribution studies. Action on this EFP is scheduled for the April meeting so the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) and industry will have an opportunity to comment before the Council and NMFS take action.

Council Action: Recommendations to NMFS on Exempted Fishing Permit Applications, as necessary.

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan Consistency Analysis

Section II, B. of the Plan deals with Science, Data Collection, Monitoring and Analysis. The NMFS proposal is expected to be consistent with the recommendations in the Plan.