

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
SABLEFISH THREE-TIER PROGRAM, QUALIFICATION WITH SETNET LANDINGS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) discussed a proposal to allow vessels using setnet gear under an Exempted Fishing Permit to qualify their landings for the sablefish three-tier system. After thorough review and debate, the GAP was unable to reach a clear consensus on the issue and will present no recommendations. Individual GAP members may provide public testimony on the proposal.

Supporters of the proposal acknowledged it would directly affect only one vessel and believed the vessel owner had made every proper attempt to use the Council process to qualify his landings. Further, there was concern that disallowing landings in this case would provide a disincentive for fishermen to engage in cooperative research activities in the future, since their landings might not qualify under any future permit system.

Opponents believed that allowing this exception would set a bad precedent which could lead to other permit holders seeking exceptions to qualify for a sablefish endorsement or even to obtain a limited entry permit. They believe the individual in question had ample time to accrue qualified landings for a better tier classification and no exception should be made in this case.

During discussion, the GAP heard from the Groundfish Management Team, Council staff, and the individual seeking the exception, so the GAP believes all points of view were well represented, and all available data was presented.

PFMC  
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