

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
PACIFIC HALIBUT MANAGEMENT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the proposals for halibut catch sharing for 2003. The GAP generally accepted the proposals as described in the situation paper, however; the GAP did express concern as to whether the closed areas proposed could be enforced any better than closed areas for fixed and trawl gear groundfish fishing. Since the groundfish closed areas need to be enforced through an extensive process including the Vessel Monitoring System, should not similar measures be contemplated for the halibut closed areas?

The GAP also discussed how to treat bycatch that had already been accounted for in setting halibut catch limits. A majority of the GAP believed that such bycatch should be able to be landed by vessels in the user group against which such bycatch is charged. Several GAP members suggested further that this should be done if observers were on board to ensure that no further bycatch occurs.

A minority of the GAP disagreed with this statement, believing the proposal would adversely affect traditional fisheries, could cause a precedent for fisheries in other states, and could lead to a new directed fishery.

PFMC
10/29/02