

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON THE
GROUND FISH STRATEGIC PLAN TWO-YEAR REVIEW

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) examined three issues in the context of Strategic Plan review: Trawl Permit Stacking; Open Access Permitting; and Fixed Gear Permit Stacking.

While the GAP agrees that capacity reduction in the trawl fishery remains the highest priority, there is little further action the Council needs to take to begin a trawl buyout program. Therefore, the GAP believes that workload efforts should be focused on developing a trawl individual quota program, especially in light of the expiration of the federal moratorium on individual quotas. Although one member of the public suggested that a permit stacking program would be preferable in his port, the GAP notes the analysis needed for permit stacking would be the same as for individual quotas so the analysis should begin as soon as possible.

In regard to open access permitting, the GAP notes that two states have already begun a permit process for nearshore fisheries. In addition, there was lack of consensus among open access representatives as to whether a federal permitting process should go forward or how it should be constructed. The GAP, therefore, recommends that open access permitting be given a lower priority. However, the GAP believes the Council has provided an essential service in facilitating data exchanges among the states on open access issues. The GAP recommends the Council continue regular meetings of its Ad Hoc Open Access Committee so that information exchange can continue.

In regard to fixed gear permit stacking, the GAP discussed a number of issues in the context of Amendment 14. These included further GAP review - as requested by the Council - of the problem of multi-vessel / multi-permit leasing presented to the Council by Mr. Mike Pettis of Newport; a proposal to allow stacking of up to six permits presented to the Council by Ms. Michelle Longo-Eder; and further discourse on the practicability of grandfathering and owner-on-board requirements. The GAP recommends the fixed gear fleet engage in further discussions of Amendment 14 issues, ideally with the assistance of a Council-appointed facilitator and Council staff, and return to the Council in April with a suite of suggestions for refinements on Amendment 14. These proposals could then be reviewed by the GAP and other advisory bodies as a whole, rather than piecemeal. Since some of the proposals could involve regulatory amendments, and thus a two meeting process, the GAP further recommends that fixed gear stacking issues be included as an agenda item for the Council in April, with final action if needed in June. We believe that this will help streamline the process of further refining Amendment 14 and allow a holistic review of all proposals.

PFMC
10/31/02