

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
REVIEW OF THE PROCESS FOR SETTING 2004 GROUND FISH SPECIFICATIONS

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) discussed the options available to the Council for setting 2004 groundfish specifications.

While the GAP has generally preferred developing specifications in a three-meeting process, the GAP is aware of the funding and personnel limitations faced by NMFS. The GAP also recognizes that the November meeting will already involve development of groundfish specifications for the 2005/2006 period.

The GAP, therefore, believes the Council has little choice other than to develop the 2004 specifications in a two-meeting process, using the June and September meetings and emergency rulemaking procedures to ensure the fishery begins on time in January 2004.

The GAP also notes, as it has in the past, that some of NMFS' burden could be alleviated if it was willing to utilize industry expertise when developing the final regulatory package. For example, there have been several corrections needed in the published boundary lines for the Rockfish Conservation Area. Had knowledgeable individuals in the industry been allowed to cross check the latitude/longitude points, some of those corrections could have been avoided.

PFMC
04/09/03