

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR APPROVING EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

The Council's groundfish fishery management plan (FMP) provides for the issuance of exempted fishing permits (EFPs) by NMFS to promote the increased use of underutilized species, to realize the expansion potential of the domestic groundfish fishery, and to increase the harvest efficiency of the fishery consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the goals of the groundfish FMP. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has developed a draft set of protocols for EFP applications that is being considered for adoption as part of the Council's Operating Procedures (Exhibit E.7, Supplemental Revised Attachment 2, April 2003). Previously, the SSC had indicated a willingness to assist the GMT in evaluating scientific issues associated with EFP applications (Exhibit G.6.c, Supplemental SSC Report, November 2002).

The SSC discussed how it could be of greatest assistance to the GMT in evaluating EFP applications, considering that many submissions are designed to address a policy or management objective, and have little or no identifiable scientific purpose. Following that discussion the SSC concluded the following:

1. All EFP applications should first be evaluated by the GMT for consistency with the goals and objectives of the groundfish FMP and the Council's strategic plan for groundfish.
2. When a proposal is submitted that includes a significant scientific component that would benefit from SSC review, the GMT can refer the application to the SSC's groundfish subcommittee for comment.
3. In such instances, the groundfish subcommittee will evaluate the scientific merits of the application and will specifically evaluate the application's (a) problem statement, (b) data collection methodology, (c) proposed analytical and statistical treatment of the data, and (d) the generality of the inferences that could be drawn by the study.

PFMC
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