

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON  
GROUND FISH STOCK ASSESSMENT REVIEW PROCESS FOR 2005 THROUGH 2006

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) discussed the stock assessment review (STAR) process for the next management biennium and the timetable for doing new or updated assessments on particular species of concern.

In reviewing the Terms of Reference (TOR) provided in Exhibit B.10, Attachment 1, the GAP notes the STAR Goals and Objectives include the need to "Satisfy the Magnuson-Stevens Sustainable Fisheries Act and other legal requirements." Aside from pointing out this is an incorrect legal reference (it should read "Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act"), the GAP believes the Terms of Reference insufficiently address the requirements of Section 304(e)(7) of that Act regarding a two-year review of management measures affecting rebuilding species. Aside from the general lack of reference to how this legally-required review is to be accomplished, the GAP is highly concerned that no effort will be made to review the status of canary rockfish, which is due for a two-year update in 2004. Even without the legal requirement, the GAP strongly believes canary qualifies for an assessment review on the basis of principles 2.a and 2.b of the Stock Assessment Priorities listed on page 5 of the TOR.

The GAP believes there is sufficient new data - both anecdotal and from new studies using submersibles - to indicate substantial changes in the canary population. Since the Council sponsors the STAR process, as noted on page 3 of the TOR, the GAP recommends the Council schedule at least an update assessment - if not a full assessment - for canary rockfish early in 2004.

The GAP also notes there is no reference to the Pacific whiting assessment scheduled for the winter of 2004. In regard to this assessment and subsequent management decisions, the GAP recommends that at least a subcommittee of the GAP, consisting of trawl, at-sea, and a processor representative, be convened at the March 2004 Council meeting to provide advice on the 2004 whiting management measures.

PFMC  
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