

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
OPEN ACCESS LIMITATION DISCUSSION AND PLANNING

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) discussed future Council action on limiting participation in the open access sector of the groundfish fishery.

There is consensus among the GAP that this should not be a high priority issue, but there is no consensus on where in the Council's workload range it should fall. There is a sense of urgency in the fishery south of Pt. Conception that participation limits need to be established as soon as possible. Representatives from other areas of the coast suggested that immediate action be left to the states or that Council action be deferred until after other high priority items - such as improving stock assessments and data - are completed.

In regard to a possible control date, there was again a range of opinions among GAP members. Some felt the November 1999 control date remain in effect; others suggested that participation has changed substantially in the last four years and that a new control date is warranted. There was agreement that if the Council decided to establish a new control date, it should be done immediately so that effort increases were not encouraged.

Finally, the GAP agreed that - if feasible based on resources available and workload priorities - the Council should reconvene the Ad Hoc Open Access Subcommittee and ask it to develop a means of identifying dedicated open access fishermen.

PFMC
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