

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
MAKAH ROCKFISH ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from the Makah Tribe and the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center on research being conducted to provide enhancement for rockfish stocks.

In general, the GAP supports the research being conducted and urges that it be continued, although the GAP questions why this has to be undertaken as a private enterprise by the Makah Tribe rather than by federal or state governments. Given the amount of money and personnel that have been dedicated to salmon enhancement, the GAP wonders why groundfish is once again being given short shrift.

GAP members raised questions about some of the possible effects of artificial propagation of rockfish, but recognized that these same questions were being addressed in the research activities currently being undertaken.

The GAP strongly recommends that - before enhancement activities proceed to the point of having cultivated rockfish released into the wild - NMFS adopt a clear policy on how these fish will be treated in regard to harvest levels and stock assessments. The GAP does not wish to see a situation analogous to Columbia River salmon, where commercial and recreational fishing is curtailed in order to protect wild stocks in spite of the abundance of hatchery stocks. If rockfish are to be released into the wild, they must be considered identical with "natural" stocks and appropriately accounted for in stock assessments.

PFMC
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