

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
CABEZON AND LINGCOD ASSESSMENTS AND LINGCOD REBUILDING ANALYSIS
FOR 2005-2006

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met jointly with the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to review the stock assessments and Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel reports for lingcod and cabezon.

In regard to lingcod, the GAP appreciates the effort put into model development by the Stock Assessment Team (STAT) Team under the lead of Mr. Tom Jagielo. However, the GAP is concerned the stock assessment did not use, and the STAR Panel did not insist on using, the observer-generated discard data and discard mortality rates developed by NMFS, approved by the GMT, and accepted by the Council for lingcod. The GAP points out that these same data and rates have been used - as a matter of Council policy - to manage harvest of species designated as overfished, of which lingcod is one. If these data are being used for management, they should also be used for assessment species. If they are not scientifically rigorous enough to be used in assessments, then they should not be used for management. You can't have it both ways.

In addition, the GAP representative to the STAR Panel pointed out the very limited data that is available and was used to assess the southern component of the lingcod stock. The GAP suggests that - as has been done in the past - the northern area assessment be used and expanded to cover the entire stock of lingcod throughout its range.

The GAP also notes that conservation-based restrictions on lingcod harvest have been in place for several years. These restrictions, especially when viewed in light of fisheries-dependent data received from both commercial and recreational fisheries, should have resulted in substantial growth in the lingcod population, especially in the northern area.

In regard to cabezon, the GAP endorses the STAR Panel recommendation for a cooperative tagging study, but suggests the data underlying the stock assessment is so weak, the Council would be better off rejecting the stock assessment and continuing with its precautionary management approach until more data is acquired.