

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON PLANNING
OF "OFF-YEAR" NON-REGULATORY SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with Dr. Elizabeth Clarke to discuss off-year science activities being coordinated by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC).

The GAP is pleased to see that the NWFSC considers the Magnuson-Stevens Act requirement for a two-year review of rebuilding to mean at least an assessment update. The GAP has previously testified that this is the proper way to approach this legal requirement, especially in view of our constantly changing fisheries and data inputs.

The GAP also generally concurs with the approach taken by the NWFSC, as illustrated in Supplemental NMFS Report D.9.b. However, the GAP is concerned the personnel and work requirements inherent in completing the large number of stock assessments and assessment reviews will overwhelm the capabilities of scientists and managers. The GAP, therefore, examined the list of proposed stock assessments provided in Table 1 of the report and suggested modifications based on the following criteria:

- a stock has been designated as overfished and requires a two-year review;
- a stock is commercially or recreationally important, and its status should be examined;
- concerns have been expressed about stock status, based on fishermen's knowledge; and
- the optimum yield for a stock has not been attained in recent years because of lack of harvest.

Using these criteria, the GAP proposes deleting seven stocks from the assessment list and adding one, as follows:

Petrale sole (delete)

Chilipepper rockfish (delete)

English sole (delete)

Arrowtooth (delete)

Yellowtail rockfish (delete)

Splitnose rockfish (delete)

Cabazon (delete)

Starry Flounder (add)

The GAP notes that shortbelly rockfish is also considered for an assessment in the Table 4 list. The majority of the GAP does not believe that resources need to be dedicated to shortbelly at this time. A minority of the GAP believes an assessment on shortbelly would serve as a good indicator of regime shifts.

The GAP appreciates Dr. Clarke consulting with us in regard to our views and we would be happy to provide a further justification for our recommendations.