

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING FOR 2007-2008 FISHERY MANAGEMENT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) met with the Groundfish Management Team and Dr. Elizabeth Clarke of the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) to discuss stock assessment priorities for 2005.

As the starting point for its discussion, the GAP used the criteria it developed last November for determining stock assessment priorities (attached), along with Table 1 (Proposed Stock Assessments) and Table 3 (Proposed Stock Assessment Review Schedule) in Exhibit E.3.b Attachment 1.

The GAP also urges the Council review the criteria for assessment priorities that it developed and consider adopting these as formal criteria for developing future assessment schedules. On certain occasions, assessments have been moved up in the priority list because a particular scientist happens to be interested in a particular species. While we commend the science community for taking an interest in our groundfish resources, we do not believe simple personal interest represents the best rationale for allocating scarce assessment and review resources. The fact that we are considering 20 full assessments and updates, along with associated reviews in 2005, is all the more reason that a well-developed set of criteria should be adopted.

In general, the GAP agreed with the recommendations in Table 1, with the following exceptions:

- The GAP believes the assessment for cabezon should be deferred, as an assessment was just done on this species, unless the Council decides to reject the recent assessment and have it re-done with additional data added.
- The GAP believes the assessments for arrowtooth, chilipepper, English sole, shortbelly, and petrale sole should be deferred, as none of these species are exhibiting any danger of decline; and in the cases of chilipepper and shortbelly, the stocks have been under-harvested.
- The GAP suggests the NWFSC examine the possibility of conducting assessments on starry flounder and gopher rockfish, if it can be determined that enough data are available to conduct an assessment and assessment authors can be found.

A minority of the GAP disagrees with the recommendation on deferring the assessment on shortbelly rockfish.

In regard to the review schedule in Table 3, the GAP urges the NWFSC to consider including the full assessment for darkblotched rockfish and the update for Pacific ocean perch in the same review. While it is uncommon to have both a full assessment and an update assessment reviewed by the same panel, the sometimes conflicting data assumptions involving these two species mandate that they be reviewed in parallel by the same panel to avoid arriving at inconsistent stock size assumptions.

GAP ASSESSMENT PRIORITY 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.
- The optimum yield for a stock has not been attained in recent years because of lack of harvest.

PFMC
03/10/04