

**PERSPECTIVES OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT
REGARDING THE 2004 PACIFIC HAKE(WHITING) FISHERY**

The Government of Canada presents its compliments to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) and would like to thank the PFMC for this opportunity to express its views on the 2004 Pacific hake (whiting) fishery.

The Government of Canada is pleased that Canada and the United States signed a new treaty for the joint management of this important shared resource in Seattle on November 21, 2003. Canada remains committed to bringing this new agreement into force as soon as possible, and hopes that both countries will be able to manage the 2004 fishery within the spirit of the treaty.

Canada would like to thank the members of the STAT team, the STAR Panel and the STAR Panel Advisors for their work in preparing the *Stock Assessment of Pacific Hake (Whiting) in U.S. and Canadian Waters in 2003* and the *STAR Panel Report* on the stock assessment. Canada has used these documents as part of its internal procedures for developing its views on the 2004 fishery, and has the following comments to offer.

With respect to the harvest rate, Canada is of the view that the F-40 percent rate should be used in 2004. This would be consistent with the treaty, which specifies F-40 with a 40/10 adjustment as the default harvest rate, and would be the most appropriate choice given the current status of the resource.

Canada is also of the view that the total allowable catch (TAC) should be derived from the model using a value of $Q=1.0$, which would be consistent with the approach that has been adopted in previous years. At this point and based on the information available, Canada believes that it would be premature to adopt a different Q value. While Canada agrees that the true value of Q might be different from 1.0, Canada is convinced that more research and analysis is required before a different value could be employed in the stock assessment model. Canada also favours adopting a risk-neutral approach to setting the coast-wide yield for 2004 at the level of 514,441 metric tons. Finally, Canada would also like to apply the harvest sharing provisions of the treaty to the 2004 fishery, with Canada taking of 26.12 percent of a commonly adopted coast-wide TAC.