

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON  
SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF  
MARINE RESERVES ISSUES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the report prepared by the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) Marine Reserves Subcommittee.

In general, the GAP agrees with the SSC report. As it has stated previously, the GAP believes that marine reserves are one tool in the management toolbox that should be available for use where appropriate. Marine reserves are not a general panacea to solve all problems related to groundfish conservation and management, but they could be useful in certain circumstances. The key point is that the problem should dictate which tool is to be used; we should not arbitrarily decide that we are going to have marine reserves and then look to see whether they have actually addressed a problem. If marine reserves are established, they should encompass well-defined scientific objectives and monitoring programs.

In this context, the GAP cautions that we should not consider marine reserves separately and distinctly from other conservation and management efforts. They have to be considered holistically along with such things as conservation of essential fish habitat, time and area closures, gear-specific closures to achieve allocation or other social and economic goals, and ecosystem-based management. In some cases, a marine reserve could encompass many of these management objectives, thereby reducing the amount of area put off limits to fishing.

PFMC  
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