

**Draft (4/7/04) Proposal for a Preferred Alternative for the Groundfish Programmatic
Bycatch Environmental Impact Statement – New Alternative 7**

Create a new Alternative 7 that includes elements of Alternatives 1, 4, and 5. Elements from Alternatives 1 that would be included in Alternative 7 would be all current status quo programs for bycatch minimization and management including but not limited to: setting optimum yield specifications, gear restrictions, area closures, variable trip and bag limits, season closures, establishing landings limits for target species based on co-occurrence ratios with overfished stocks, etc. The FMP would be amended to more fully describe our standardized reporting methodology program and to require the use of bycatch management measures indicated under Alternative 1 for protection of overfished and depleted Groundfish stocks and to reduce bycatch and to reduce bycatch mortality to the extent practicable. These would be used until replaced by better tools as they are developed. A baseline accounting of bycatch by sector shall be established for the purpose of establishing future bycatch program goals.

Elements from Alternative 4 that would be included in Alternative 7 would be the Development and adoption of vessel and sector-specific caps of overfished and depleted Groundfish species where practicable. We anticipate phasing in sector Bycatch caps that would include: monitoring standards, full retention programs, and individual vessel incentives for exemption from caps.

Elements from Alternatives 5 that would be included in Alternative 7 would be the support of future use of IFQ programs for appropriate sectors of the fishery. The FMP would incorporate the Strategic Plan's goal of reducing overcapacity in all commercial fisheries.