

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
FINAL ADOPTION OF 2005/2006 MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) offers the following comments on 2005/2006 management measures.

Except as noted, the GAP supports the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) recommendations which reflect the preferred alternatives adopted by the Council under agenda item C.6 and trawl option 1 tentatively adopted by the Council under agenda item C.8.

In regard to *OTHER FLATFISH ACCEPTABLE BIOLOGICAL CATCH (ABC) AND OPTIMUM YIELD (OY)*, the GAP supports the ABC calculation, but rejects the OY calculation as arbitrary and unreasonable in the case of Rex sole and sanddabs. As noted during Council discussion, considerable effort, time, and expense was directed towards developing selective trawl mesh which will avoid take of juvenile flatfish. The reduction in OY for these two species ignores this data. The reduction is being suggested because it is "Council policy." The Council has made exceptions to policy before, when doing so reflected common sense. We believe that common sense should again prevail.

The GAP again forwards the suggestion we made under agenda item C.6 that federal and state managers, including the Council and enforcement, work cooperatively with the whiting industry to develop a system of closures that can be tailored to resource emergencies and put in place as needed to protect overfished species. We were amazed that a good-faith industry offer to work cooperatively towards conservation was so strongly rejected by one federal agency. At a time when the fishing industry and the fishery management system are being vilified as working against sound conservation and management, we think the idea should at least be explored.

In regard to research catches, we again suggest the Council establish a policy of deducting research catch of non-overfished species from the ABC, rather than the OY and that the Council consider modifying the Pacific Groundfish Fishery Management Plan to do the same with overfished species. We appreciate the Council's action under agenda item B.4.c to complement this recommendation by supporting changes in federal law governing control of research catches.

Regarding *OTHER CALIFORNIA MANAGEMENT ISSUES*, the GAP cannot provide comment on the issues of retention of other flatfish with sanddab gear and the ridgeback prawn trawl exemption. Neither of these issues were brought forward to the GAP, so we were unable to discuss them. In the future, the GAP would appreciate having the opportunity to review management issues of this nature.

Regarding *COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES*, the GAP supports the changes to limited entry trawl and limited entry fixed gear recommended by the GMT.

Finally, in regard to *CALIFORNIA RECREATIONAL*, the GAP supports Revised Option 5 as presented by the State of California, with a 24" minimum size for lingcod. This option provides

the necessary savings for sensitive species while allowing fishing opportunities for both private recreational and recreational charter sectors. The path taken to arriving at this option was a rough one for all concerned. Sacrifices have been made - sometimes reluctantly - by all of those affected. We are sensitive to the concerns of the Enforcement Consultants and realize it will impose a burden on enforcement agencies. It will also impose a burden on fishermen and small fishing companies. Nevertheless, we believe it is the best that can be developed at this time.

The GAP wants to be clear that - if savings of overfished species are greater than anticipated - we expect strong consideration be given to appropriate inseason adjustments. Inseason management of recreational fisheries is difficult to accomplish, given the amount and timing of data with which we can work. Notwithstanding this problem, the GAP believes that inseason adjustments should be made if warranted.

With this in mind, we will be anticipating possible inseason adjustments in September 2004, which reflect the use of data from the California Recreational Fisheries Survey.

PFMC  
06/18/04