

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Statement  
Regarding the Habitat Committee's Report on the Council Communication Plan  
(B-4.b supplemental HC Report September 2004)**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has concerns regarding the focus of the comments made by the Habitat Committee regarding Council Communication in the above-referenced document.

The focus of the statement is the recent closure in Oregon due to early attainment of a black rockfish sport harvest cap. Council staff was quoted in the Oregon media during this closure explaining that, "although the Council/NMFS recommends and sets harvest caps, it is the state responsibility to track and manage fishery closures". The burden is appropriately on the states to handle public notification of state actions resulting from the existing complex federally-driven management framework.

However, lack of timely notice is exacerbated by the extremely inadequate funding for states to support the monitoring and data infrastructure mandated by the federal regulations, which have grown in complexity in a very short period of time. From the perspective of the state, these facts do cause public confusion regarding the federal role in establishing and implementing this groundfish management framework through the states. It would be assistive if our Federal partners could provide that context when asked about state management actions that result from Federal decisions. But this is not an issue that the Council Communication Plan is likely to resolve.

It might be suggested that a more appropriate direction for a Council Communication plan would be to consider the frequent pattern of in-season actions taken by the Council, and what communication (vs. management) issues exist relative to those actions. In addition, our recent experience in Oregon shows a large gap in public understanding of the driving forces (e.g., stock assessments) and mechanisms which result in federal constraints on fisheries.