

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
CORDELL BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from the Cordell Banks National Marine Sanctuary and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary staff on the process and proposals to seek Council participation in the fisheries regulatory regime in the Sanctuaries. Unfortunately, the GAP did not receive the extensive documents accompanying the presentation until the beginning of the Council meeting. In addition, there was virtually no participation by the public in the GAP meeting, so GAP members who are unfamiliar with the Sanctuary areas and proposals did not have the opportunity to get information from affected Sanctuary users.

The GAP realizes the Council and the Sanctuaries have certain time requirements for dealing with these proposals. These time lines do not coincide with the Council meeting schedule. It does appear some flexibility can be accommodated, however.

Given the lack of time to review voluminous and somewhat confusing material and the lack of input from the public, the GAP is not comfortable making specific recommendations on the detailed proposals presented. The GAP, therefore, recommends the Council work with the Sanctuaries to adjust the time line so that Council action can occur at the March 2005 meeting.

If the Council adopts this approach, the GAP will assign a voluntary subcommittee to work with the Sanctuary staff and provide the GAP with a detailed set of recommendations at the March meeting. The GAP would expect the subcommittee to review the Sanctuary proposals and consult with interested members of the public on an informal basis. If this recommendation is acceptable to the Council, the voluntary subcommittee would be made up of two GAP commercial fishing representatives, one GAP recreational representative, and one GAP conservation representative who are familiar with the issues and the area.

If the Council decides to move forward with reviewing detailed proposals prior to the March meeting, the GAP requests authority to conduct a GAP meeting via conference call sometime in January, at which time the voluntary subcommittee will submit its report and detailed GAP recommendations will be developed.

PFMC
11/03/04