

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR GROUND FISH REBUILDING PLAN REVIEW

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the information provided on establishing Terms of Reference for groundfish rebuilding plans.

As a general statement, the GAP believes the Council should provide for flexibility in the Terms of Reference, to the extent provided by law. As we have seen on several occasions, new stock assessments can reveal substantial changes are warranted based on the best scientific information. The Council must ensure that new data results in more precise rebuilding plans, either positive or negative. We should not lock ourselves into a single standard - for example, a set probability of rebuilding within a specified time period, translating into an immutable harvest rate - when science tells us that a different standard can and should be used.

In a specific comment, the GAP requests that the language in Section 4.5.3.6 of the proposed "Process for Development and Approval of Rebuilding Plans" (Agenda Item F.3.a, Attachment 2) be amended by including in the third bullet point on page 3 a reference to the GAP along with the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Groundfish Management Team (GMT).

Finally, albeit slightly off the subject, the GAP notes that the existing Terms of Reference for stock assessment review includes a requirement that Stock Assessment Teams provide a 10-year projection of stock status with stock assessments. While this requirement is logical for many long-lived species, it is highly speculative for other species that experience dynamic recruitment events or highly variable recruitment over a short time frame (e.g., Pacific whiting, some species of flatfish, and bocaccio rockfish). The GAP suggests the SSC be asked to re-examine and modify the Terms of Reference to accommodate species that examine these characteristics.

PFMC
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