

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON
CORDELL BANKS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

In reference to our general comments on National Marine Sanctuaries (NMS) presented under Agenda Item H.1, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) makes the following recommendations regarding the Cordell Banks National Marine Sanctuary (CBNMS).

CBNMS is proposing a change in its designation document which would remove an exception prohibiting the taking of NMS resources other than “in the course of normal fishing.” CBNMS is particularly concerned about the effects of fishing operations on geographic features and associated bottom-dwelling organisms in a particular area of the NMS. There appear to be no fishing activities in the area other than salmon trolling.

The GAP recommends the Council consider this area for inclusion as a Habitat Area of Particular Concern under the proposed essential fish habitat plan amendment. As part of that process, the Council should also examine closure of the area to bottom-tending gear. This approach, using existing Council authority, would address the concerns of CBNMS and preclude any need to change the CBNMS designation document to allow regulation of fishing.

PFMC
03/10/05