

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
CONTROL DATE FOR THE LONGLINE SPINY DOGFISH FISHERY

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) recognizes the dogfish fishery has become an important fishery along the West Coast, particularly in waters off of Washington State, and the resource itself may be vulnerable to overfishing, due to their late maturity, low productivity, long life spans, and low reproductive rates. Historical patterns of dogfish exploitation on the West Coast, concerns over the vulnerability of elasmobranch resources expressed in Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation documents of the North Pacific Council, and the recent declaration that dogfish stocks have been overfished on the East Coast, further illustrate the potential vulnerability of the resource. As a result of such concerns, the GMT supports management actions that would improve monitoring of ongoing dogfish landings and discourage any potential increase in the targeting of this resource.

One action that may work towards this objective would be for the Council to adopt a separate acceptable biological catch and optimum yield for dogfish with associated trip limits and other harvest control regulations. Another action would be to set a control date for dogfish catch histories, in order to minimize the potential consequences of speculation-driven targeting of dogfish in anticipation of future management options. The GMT supports these options, but with the caveat that for the latter action, in particular, support is limited to GMT concerns over the potential risk to the resource if no action is taken. Consequently, this support should not be interpreted as GMT support or preference towards particular future management options for this fishery, including longline endorsements.

PFMC
04/07/05