

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FINAL
CONSIDERATION OF INSEASON ADJUSTMENTS

2005

Petrale Sole

As an alternative to a complete closure of the trawl fishery in December to reduce impacts on Petrale, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommends eliminating all December trawl opportunities with the exception of the Dover sole, thornyheads, and sablefish deepwater complex (DTS) from 36° N. latitude to the US/Canada border. The GAP believes that the net effect of this approach will be a greater reduction of impacts on Petrale than a complete December closure. South of 36° N. latitude the GAP recommends the same closure as above with the exception of the shoreward side of the 50 fathom line.

Closing all trawl opportunity in December would create an incentive for vessels to take all of their DTS landings and slope rockfish in November and incur the attendant incidental catch of Petrale sole. By leaving December open for DTS only, some of this effort would be shifted into December. With the Petrale and slope rockfish closure in place, Petrale impacts may be reduced as vessels fishing in December would have little incentive to fish near the seaward line of the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA), where Petrale impacts would be greater than they would be at greater depths. If that same effort occurred in November, it is likely that more of the fishing would occur closer to the seaward line of the RCA. November impacts on Petrale could be mitigated with voluntary plant limits of zero on Petrale landings.

Safety is an additional issue. An early closure may cause safety concerns as vessels may be forced to fish in undesirable weather conditions in order to take their full DTS limits prior to the end of November.

2006

The GAP supports Groundfish Management Team (GMT) Option 3 for 2006. If the Council wishes to limit the limited entry bottom trawl fishery to stay within 8 mt of canary rockfish, the GAP recommends shifting the shoreward RCA boundary north of 40° 10' N. latitude to 75 fm in Period 3.

The trawl members of the GAP urge that, if the final scorecard estimate for canary rockfish is below 8 mt, this does not set a precedent leading to further erosion of the trawl canary rockfish management target.