

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON MANAGEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2007-2008 GROUND FISH FISHERIES – PART 1

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the proposed alternatives for 2007-2008 acceptable biological catches (ABCs) / optimum yields (OYs) for the groundfish fishery and has the following comments.

In general, the GAP has concerns that the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) has not been consistent in their proposal of low and high OY alternatives. In some cases higher OY alternatives could be proposed to provide a more complete range for analysis. The GAP believes that the full range of options should be available for analysis and would like to see this done on a more consistent basis. In addition, the GAP recommends that all proposed alternatives have a justifiable scientific basis and are not the result of litigation threats.

The GAP recommends supporting the range of alternative ABCs and OYs presented in Table 1: GMT Recommended alternatives with the following exceptions:

1. Sablefish: The range of options should include an ABC/OY alternative of 6,775 mt. The survey stock biomass has doubled during the last six years- demonstrating a more productive stock than current interpretations suggest.
2. Petrale: The range should incorporate an OY alternative of 4,212 mt. This is based on strong recruitment observed in the latest survey which was not incorporated into the latest assessment.
3. Widow: The range should incorporate an OY alternative of 4,415 mt.
4. Short spine: The range should incorporate an OY alternative of 3,158 mt.

All of these recommendations are based on numbers from decision tables using various high catch models from each respective stock assessment.

The GAP has serious concerns regarding management of Widow rockfish as an “overfished” species subject to a rebuilding plan and associated restrictions when the latest science demonstrates that the stock was in fact never in an overfished condition.

Lastly, the GAP strongly recommends that the Council identify a plan for collecting and incorporating economic data to help better support the proposed ABCs and OYs. This plan should include the identification of resources to accomplish this task as well as a determination of what data should be collected and what mechanism the Council will use in considering this data as they make their decisions.