

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON MANAGEMENT
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2007-2008 GROUND FISH FISHERIES

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) heard a report from Mr. John DeVore and Dr. John Field summarizing the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) recommendations for 2007-2008 groundfish optimum yield (OY) alternatives. It is apparent that the recent court ruling on darkblotched rockfish has created uncertainty regarding how to set OY's for species requiring rebuilding, and consequently what the constraints on other species will be due to bycatch.

The SSC discussed the following specific issues of concern with the GMT:

- 1) Four new assessments are now available for species currently managed as part of species complex groups. The SSC discussed the merits of developing separate OY's for these species, as opposed to continuing to manage them within their respective complexes. The SSC sees merit in managing starry flounder under an OY separate from the flatfish complex, in consideration of protecting other potentially weak species in the complex. The SSC notes that, given the management considerations voiced by the GMT, it is reasonable to continue to manage blackgill, gopher, and kelp greenling within complexes.
- 2) With regard to Petrale sole, the SSC discussed the apparent paradox that the OY recommended for the southern area increased, despite a new assessment that indicates a relatively more depleted stock. It appears that the reason for the higher OY in the south in the short term is due to a transient and uncertain recruitment pulse. For the purpose of establishing a separate OY for the southern area, the SSC notes that using the 25% precautionary catch reduction as specified in the groundfish fishery management plan may be appropriate.
- 3) With regard to Dover sole, the SSC discussed the relatively large increase in OY, and considered the merits of analyzing an alternative lower OY option. The SSC notes that the estimate of maximum sustainable yield from the assessment (16,500 mt) may provide a logical alternative OY that could be sustainable in the long term.