

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON GROUND FISH
ENDANGERED SPECIES WORKGROUP REPORT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an update on this agenda item from Mr. Brian Hooper and offers the following comments.

The GAP appreciates the work done by the Groundfish Endangered Species Workgroup (GESW), as well as the collaborative approach and inclusion of a fishing industry representative in the discussions. That input is invaluable in consideration of impacts of groundfish fisheries on Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species and on recommended management measures for mitigating those impacts.

The GAP notes that in general, as highlighted by the GESW report, groundfish fisheries generally have minimal interactions with ESA-listed marine mammals, sea turtles, eulachon, green sturgeon, and seabirds. For many of these species, the rarity and uniqueness of interactions makes estimating impacts and developing mitigation measures challenging.

With regard to eulachon, the GAP thinks the GESW is doing a good job trying to figure out how to sample catch in groundfish fisheries, as well as determining the appropriate reinitiation thresholds. This is a challenging process, and as noted above, the challenges are compounded by the extremely low numbers encountered in groundfish fisheries.

With regard to humpback whales, the GAP supports the GESW recommendations for further exploration and development of tools to minimize overlap of whales and fishing activity, with the aim to ensure the continued economic viability of important West Coast fisheries.

Finally, for short-tailed albatross the GAP supports the GESW recommendation to explore ways to improve streamer lines or gear configuration for the purpose of minimizing seabird interactions. The GAP believes industry should be involved in the development and testing of new/modified gear.