

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON TRAWL CATCH SHARES - GEAR SWITCHING AND TRAWL SABLEFISH AREA MANAGEMENT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an overview of the issue from Dr. Jim Seger, and offers the following comments and recommendations.

The GAP could not reach consensus on the issue of whether the Council should proceed with the development of alternatives related to gear switching and trawl sablefish area management. A majority of the GAP believes that the Council should move forward with further development of alternatives, especially since the no-action alternative is always an option. This group believes that a lack of available sablefish, due at least in part to significant catch of individual fishing quota (IFQ) sablefish with fixed gear, is preventing the IFQ program from achieving its stated goals and objectives.

A minority of the GAP believes that other factors such as market challenges, incomplete implementation of IFQ follow-on actions, and price differentials are preventing the IFQ program from meeting its goals and objectives, and that moving forward with further alternative development will not solve the challenges facing the program. Moreover, there is the potential to harm legitimate participation using fixed gear.

If the Council decides to proceed with development of alternatives, the GAP recommends the Council consider involving the Groundfish Allocation Committee (GAC). Occasionally, the GAC is used to frame alternatives for controversial or complex issues requiring high-level policy decisions that are difficult to handle within the time constraints of a Council meeting or within other stakeholder bodies. The GAP notes the GAC membership should be updated since it hasn't met in several years and some of the listed members are no longer involved in the process.

PFMC
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