

## 6.0 Data and Research Needs

In November, 2000 the Groundfish Oversight Committee identified the following research needs for the groundfish fishery and resource:

1. Investigations into stock definition, stock movements, mixing, and migration, such as through tagging studies, DNA markers, morphological characteristics, etc. Effect of assumptions on stock definition, movements, mixing, and migration on stock assessments.
2. Methods to improve sampling of commercial catch at age data, such as through cooperative NMFS/industry programs to supplement port agents.
3. Investigations into relationships between stocks, including predator/prey relationships and evaluation of whether stock status of some species is slowing rebuilding of groundfish stocks.
4. Comparative studies on the impacts (positive and negative) of gear on habitat, such as the different impacts between chain nets, roller gear, and rockhopper gear, etc. Studies on whether limiting roller or rockhopper gear, or specifying other aspects of trawl gear, results in areas of complex habitat that are not used by trawl fishermen.
5. Development of appropriate programs to collect information required for social and economic impact analysis.
6. Research on extent and composition of discards and bycatch in the groundfish fishery.
7. Research fishing practices or gear modifications that may change the ratio of component catch species or improve selectivity of gear. As an example, research should consider ways to catch flatfish and not roundfish, or ways to target haddock and not cod.
8. Research on bycatch and discards of groundfish in other fisheries, including small mesh fisheries, and fishing practices or gear modifications that may reduce bycatch or improve selectivity of gear.
9. Quantify the impacts of closed areas, and evaluate the effectiveness timing closures to coincide with spawning activity (e.g. Gulf of Maine rolling closures).
10. Development of industry-based information collection systems to improve information used for groundfish management.

Section 9.3.4 of the SEIS describes EFH research needs identified by the Habitat Technical Team.