

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVES: SCOPING AND SELECTION

Dr. Kit Dahl provided a report to the Habitat Committee (HC) reviewing the three Fishery Ecosystem Plan initiatives that the Ecosystem Workgroup could take up next.

Habitat concerns are directly tied to the climate impacts upon fish, and may be relevant for climate impacts on fishing communities (for example, habitat-based management required to mitigate impacts such as sea level rise on fishing communities). Therefore, the HC recommends that the Council select the Cross-Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Effects of Climate Shifts as the next initiative to address, as it will help us understand the best available science regarding near- to medium-term climate shifts and long-term climate change on the ecosystem, fisheries, and fish habitats. The initiative could help improve responsive fishery management decisions. Focusing on developing strategies for building flexibility, responsiveness, and resilience in managed stocks makes sense as a first step.

The HC recommends that the Council pursue the first two themes of the first initiative (webinars to understand possible effects, and finding ways to integrate the information about climate effects into the management process). Then, as a future step, incorporate consideration of the fishing community vulnerability to climate shifts into potential management considerations. That is, climate impacts on stocks should be understood before we can understand impacts on fishing communities.

To reduce the scope of the effort, there could be a focus on the species or FMPs most at risk from climate change as identified by the Climate Vulnerability Assessment (e.g. salmon and rockfish).

The HC noted the overlap of this work with other existing and planned initiatives, such as the annual California Current report and the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment climate indicators. It would be useful to consider how these efforts can work together and whether components can be integrated.

PFMC  
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