

## FINAL FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is considering ecosystem-based approaches to fishery management and is in the process of developing a Pacific Coast Fishery Ecosystem Plan for the U.S. Portion of the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem (FEP) as a vehicle for bringing ecosystem-based principles into the Council decision-making process under its existing Fishery Management Plans (FMPs).

The Council last reviewed the FEP in November of 2012 and provided guidance on further FEP development in advance of final adoption. Per Council guidance, the Ecosystem Plan Development Team (EPDT) has compiled a revised public review draft of the FEP (Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 1) including an Ecosystem Initiatives Appendix A (Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 2). Both of these public review drafts as well as a recorded reader's guide to the FEP webinar were posted to the Council's Ecosystem-Based Management web page in February 2013.

The Council has scheduled an informational briefing in the FEP on Saturday April 6 that is intended to help the Council, its advisory bodies, and the public understand the various issues and objectives associated with the scheduled final adoption of the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). Those interested in providing comments intended to influence Council action on the FEP should do so under this agenda item, not at the informational briefing.

At the November 2012 Council meeting, the Council recommended that ecosystem science considerations, both cross-FMP and specific FMP considerations, be removed from the FEP and placed in the Council's Research and Data Needs document. At the March 2013 Council meeting, the Council reviewed and approved a final Research and Data Needs document that reflected this recommendation. Additionally, the Council recommended that the FEP section on ecosystem initiatives be placed in its own appendix. The resulting Public Review Draft Ecosystem Initiatives appendix (Appendix A): 1) provides the public with an opportunity to review and comment on a potential FEP initiative process; 2) provides a fleshed-out example FEP Initiative 1 that, if forwarded by the Council, would begin a process to prohibit fishing for unfished lower trophic level (forage) fish species within the U.S. West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); and 3) provides additional potential cross-FMP initiatives for review and consideration by the Council and the public.

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to consider adoption of a final FEP. It is envisioned that the FEP will then become a "living document" that evolves in response to changing Council needs and the availability of new information. The Section 1.3 of the draft FEP proposes that the main body of the FEP be revised on no more that a six-year cycle while the Ecosystem Initiatives could be revisited annually in November to revise, add to, or prioritize the list of initiatives for the coming year.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Consider adopting a final FEP.**
- 2. Consider adopting a final Ecosystem Initiatives Appendix.**
- 3. Provide guidance on priority tasks for future work on ecosystem initiatives.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 1: Public Review Draft Pacific Coast Fishery Ecosystem Plan for the U.S. Portion of the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem (**electronic only, on the Council web page and the April 2013 Briefing Book CD**).
2. Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 2: Public Review Draft Ecosystem Initiatives Appendix to the Pacific Coast Fishery Ecosystem Plan (**electronic only, on the Council web page and the April 2013 Briefing Book CD**).
3. Agenda Item H.1.b, Habitat Committee Report.
4. Agenda Item H.1.b, CPSMT Report.
5. Agenda Item H.1.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Pacific Coast Fishery Ecosystem Plan

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03/25/13