

ECOSYSTEM PLAN DEVELOPMENT TEAM REPORT ON AN ECOSYSTEM FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

At its November 2009 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) discussed ecosystem-based fishery management planning and assigned following series of tasks to Council staff and to the Council's newly-formed Ecosystem Plan Development Team (EPDT) and Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS), which are detailed on page 1 of H.1.b., Attachment 1, *Ecosystem Fishery Management Planning for U.S. West Coast Fisheries*. The EPDT met jointly with the EAS in February 2010 and in an individual session in July 2010, primarily to complete a report to respond to the above requests received from the Council (Agenda Item H.1.b, Attachment 1). This report complements that larger initial report and focuses on EPDT recommended alternatives for the council's Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan (EFMP) and suggested next steps in developing an EFMP.

A challenge the EPDT faced in its Council-response report was in drafting a potential purpose and need statement and a potential set of goals and objectives without knowing the full scope of the Council desires for an EFMP or other ecosystem planning document. The report's purpose and need statement (Section 3) and goals and objectives statement (Section 4) are necessarily loosely defined, to be refined as the EPDT receives further Council guidance over time. Section 5 of the report highlights the issues the Council might consider as it addresses the potential regulatory scope of and management unit species within an EFMP. Receiving Council guidance on regulatory scope, management unit species, and the geographic range (Section 6) of the EFMP will be essential to future EPDT work planning. The EPDT notes that the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Habitat Committee both provided comments on these issues at the Council's November 2009 meeting (see November 2009 Briefing Book, Agenda Item D.1.b) and that the EPDT has also received comments from the EAS on these issues. EPDT recommendations to the Council, below, are intended to take into account the guidance already received from these bodies.

One of the more important ideas that kept re-surfacing during EPDT discussions is that moving the Council process toward ecosystem-based fisheries management is not as straightforward as developing another set of FMP documents. Ecosystem-based fisheries management is a philosophy that can and should be woven throughout Council operations. To that end, the EPDT makes several recommendations, below, to begin cross-FMP discussions between and within the Council's many advisory bodies.

Depending on Council direction, the EPDT anticipates working on its next Council assignments over fall and winter 2010, with tentative plans to report back to the Council by its March 2011 meeting, or as soon thereafter as the Council directs.

EPDT Recommendations for Council Action or Direction on EFMP Development

- Choose a document or ecosystem planning process format (status quo with no planning document, advisory fishery ecosystem plan, umbrella EFMP, regional omnibus, or coastwide omnibus EFMP) and direct the EPDT to outline such an FMP for its next report to the Council.
- Adopt the West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as the EFMP's area of regulatory authority. Note Council's interest in information on: (1) how human activities, including fisheries management, within state marine waters, upland watersheds and high seas waters affect ocean ecosystems, and (2) how natural ecosystem dynamics beyond the EEZ may affect Council-managed species and fisheries.
- If the Council recommends proceeding with an EFMP, provide guidance on the types of species the Council may wish to see evaluated for management under an EFMP.

EPDT Recommendations for Council Action or Direction on Moving Council Process Toward Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management

- Direct that each FMP's Management Team and Advisory Subpanel collaborate to respond to Council's November 2009 direction to "review the existing Council FMPs to identify existing approaches and commonalities regarding ecosystem approaches to management." These bodies should also identify where their FMPs or fisheries interact with other fisheries outside of their FMPs.
- Direct that Advisory Bodies charged with leading the Council's essential fish habitat (EFH) review processes to ensure that any EFH, habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC,) or EFH closed areas may be compatibly mapped across FMPs. The Council and the public should be able to see maps of all of those areas for all of its FMPs, to better consider cross-FMP EFH issues.
- Adopt a schedule of receiving regular Council briefings on various aspects of California Current ecosystem science and policy.
- Request that NMFS lead development of a prototype "State of the California Current Ecosystem Report" that would ultimately be scheduled for regular delivery to the Council and the public.

PFMC
09/08/10