

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM (GMT) REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVES

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) appreciated receiving a presentation from Ms. Yvonne deReynier (National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region) at its February 2-6 work session in Seattle, Washington, regarding the upcoming review of the various initiatives in the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) at the Council's March 2015 meeting.

As the GMT noted previously ([Agenda Item H.1.b, Supplemental GMT Report, September 2014](#)), each state records landings of unsorted species (e.g., forage fish and ecosystem component species) differently. There has not been a comprehensive analysis across the states of how unsorted species are currently tracked on fish tickets, how additional new sampling requirements would impact existing requirements and priorities, or how the coastwide sampling could best be coordinated. Coordinating port sampling across the states and Fishery Management Plans (FMP) to more efficiently address all of the competing priorities could be addressed as a new Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative, or through another appropriate process. The level of coordination that is viable will likely vary between FMPs and states, depending on the goals and objectives of the various states' port sampling procedures. **The GMT recommends working with state agencies to scope potential incremental improvements to, and coordination of, each state's port sampling procedures to meet a variety of coast-wide sampling needs across the FMPs. The GMT recommends the Council consider this issue either as a new initiative or through another process as appropriate.**

The GMT also discussed the importance of improving our understanding of the socio-economic effects of fisheries management decisions on coastal communities. Through the years the GMT has heard anecdotal information from fishery participants that groundfish fisheries are a vital part of their fishing portfolio. Additional socio-economic information could be collected to help understand the dynamics of how changes to groundfish fishery management measures, particularly restrictions to protect overfished species, affect fishing communities. The Cross-FMP Socio-Economic Initiative at section A.2.7 of the FEP captures how existing information might be used to inform impacts of decisions within each FMP, and also how management decisions across FMPs could be assessed. **The GMT recommends that this initiative be augmented to include expansion of existing economic data collections or development of new information collections targeted specifically at improving our understanding of socio-economic impacts of fishery management decisions, both within FMPs and across FMPs.**

Similarly, the GMT continues to support the Indicators for Analyses of Council Actions Initiative at section A.2.9 of the FEP. Understanding the cumulative impacts of Council actions in a more comprehensive and consistent way across the various FMPs will improve transparency, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses, and decision-making. Continuing to refine the state of the California Current Ecosystem report should help inform this initiative.