

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON THE ECOSYSTEM-BASED FISHERY MANAGEMENT ROADMAP

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) received a briefing on this issue from Ms. Heather Sagar of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and has the following comments.

The GMT appreciates the comprehensive amount of information that was compiled by NMFS in order to guide the implementation of Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) on a national scale. Overall, the detailed list of actions included in the roadmap seems to be consistent with the approach that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) has taken in the implementation of the Pacific Coast Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) to-date.

Process Implications

The GMT has some specific questions about implementation of the EBFM roadmap. The draft roadmap makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the NMFS Regional Offices to implement the EBFM policy, yet it is unclear how the Regions would interact with the Councils to accomplish this objective. For example, it's our understanding that the Council would need to consider how each proposed action would comply with the final EBFM policy directive since it would be in the Council's best interest to propose actions that comply with the policy. This led to GMT discussions regarding how such a process would occur and who would facilitate such discussions, analyses, etc. The GMT encourages NMFS (both at the national and regional levels) to seek Council and advisory body input during implementation of the policy.

Additionally, we discussed how this process would need to be considered along with the suite of other Council issues and as such, implementation of the benchmarks, timelines and periodic reviews under the EBFM roadmap would need to be integrated into existing Council processes, such as the catch shares 5-year review, biennial harvest specifications and management measures, etc.

PFMC
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