

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
ECOSYSTEM-BASED FISHERY MANAGEMENT ROADMAP

The Habitat Committee (HC) met in a joint session with the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) and Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) to hear a presentation by Heather Sagar (National Marine Fisheries Service) on the draft Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) Roadmap. The HC offers the following comments.

On page 5, Section 1.2 of the Roadmap: The EBFM document calls for increased coordination of science and management efforts across living marine resources. The document needs to explicitly acknowledge and prioritize the vital role of physical habitats in mediating ecosystem responses.

Our understanding of the physical habitat requirements and relationships for specific life-stages is severely limited for most managed species. The Council's ability to conserve essential fish habitat (EFH) through EFH designations and reviews needs to be informed by increased scientific understanding of species-habitat relationships. This effort should be a top priority focused on acquiring scientific information and improving efforts to describe and document the location of habitats for managed species. NOAA could strengthen the Roadmap by acknowledging the need to acquire species-specific habitat information and the need to fund the long-term research necessary to do so.

PFMC
09/15/16