

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE UPDATE

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) reviewed the materials for this agenda item and members of the GAP attended the August 21, 2018 Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) Webinar. As noted in our G.2 report, the GAP appreciates the work done by the EWG in developing the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) and, through the Initiatives Process, advancing ecosystem-related matters of concern to the Council and Council family.

The Climate and Communities Initiative is important and should be a priority for the EWG moving forward. This initiative should provide a means for the Council to recognize, adapt, and respond to changing environmental conditions that effect fisheries and fishing communities. The GAP recommends that work continue on this front, building upon EWG efforts and the recent Nature Conservancy Workshop.

The GAP thinks progress on this initiative would benefit from the development of tangible scenarios (or case studies) that coalesce what is a large and nebulous set of potential environmental changes, potential fishery effects (both positive and negative), and potential community impacts into easier to grasp and understand examples. This would facilitate accessibility to important information that is currently, to some, opaque and intractable. Therefore, the GAP recommends the Council task the EWG with developing example scenarios to facilitate Council and advisory body consideration of potential fishery management actions to prepare for and respond to environmental changes that could affect fisheries and fishing communities. For example, as noted during the EWG webinar, environmental changes could result in more northerly distribution of yelloweye rockfish, such that it no longer resides in California waters to an extent that management restrictions on California fisheries would benefit the stock. How could the Council prepare for and respond to this type environmental change and corresponding management challenge?

The GAP notes that in developing these example scenarios the EWG should endeavor to synchronize ecosystem information with the various fishery management cycles. That is, ecosystem science is long-term, looking both forward and back over large time spans; whereas fisheries are managed on relatively short time scales. While it is important to consider the long-term impacts of this change and how it relates to management decisions, the GAP thinks that it is also important to have the ability to slice off a piece of ecosystem science and add it to the management process as the sausage is being made.