



FACT SHEET: FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN

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The purpose of the Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) is to enhance species-specific management with more ecosystem science, broader ecosystem considerations, and policies that coordinate management across the Council's fishery management plans and the California Current Ecosystem (the California Current affects the entire West Coast). The FEP helps the Council consider policy choices and tradeoffs as they affect managed species and the ecosystem.

The Council adopted the FEP in April 2013.

The FEP helps improve management decisions by providing biophysical and socioeconomic information on

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climate conditions, climate change, habitat conditions, and ecosystem interactions. For example, information generated through the FEP helps provide buffers against the uncertainties of environmental and human-caused impacts to the marine environment. The FEP also helps prioritize research needs to address gaps in ecosystem knowledge and policies, particularly with respect to the cumulative effects of fisheries management on marine ecosystems and fishing communities.

The FEP is meant to be an informational document. Information in the FEP, results of the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment, and the annual California Current Ecosystem Status Report are available to the Council for use in management, but how these items will affect fishery management decisions is at the discretion of the Council. Like all Council decision making materials, these documents are posted on our website (www.pcouncil.org).

ECOSYSTEM INITIATIVES

The FEP identifies "initiatives," or follow-on actions the Council could take to promote ecosystem-based fishery management. These initiatives are meant to be broad-scale, affecting more than one fishery management plan.

When the Council adopted the FEP it identified these initiatives to consider taking up in future years:

- Protection of Unfished Forage Fish
- Potential Long-Term Effects of Council Harvest Policies on Age- and Size- Distribution in Managed Stocks
- Bio-Geographic Region Identification and Assessment
- Cross-FMP Bycatch and Catch Monitoring Policy
- Cross-FMP Essential Fish Habitat
- Cross-FMP Safety
- Human Recruitment to the Fisheries
- Cross-FMP Socio-Economic Effects of Fisheries Management
- Cross-FMP Effects of Climate Shift
- Indicators for Analyses of Council Actions
- Optimum Yield Considerations



Every year, at its March meeting, the Council decides whether to start working one of the initiatives listed above. Every two years, the Council has the opportunity to identify new initiatives it wants to embark on in future years.

The FEP itself is scheduled for comprehensive review every five years.

PROTECTING UNFISHED, UNMANAGED FORAGE FISH

The first initiative taken up by the Council aimed to prohibit the development of new directed fisheries on forage species that are not currently managed, at least until the Council has had an adequate opportunity to assess the science relating to

any proposed fishery and any potential impacts to our existing fisheries and communities.

The Council completed work on the initiative in 2015, and protective measures for forage species were added to each of the Council's four fishery management plans in 2016.

COORDINATED ECOSYSTEM INDICATOR REVIEW INITIATIVE

The Council completed this initiative in 2016. Through this initiative, the Council and its advisory bodies recommended improvements to the annual California Current Ecosystem Status Report to ensure it better supports Council decision making.

CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Council embarked on this initiative in 2017 by combining the Cross-FMP Effects of Climate Shift and the Cross-FMP Socio-Economic Effects of Fisheries Management initiatives. The goal of this initiative is to consider strategies for improving the flexibility and responsiveness of Council management actions to near-term climate shift and long-term climate change, and strategies for increasing the resiliency of Council-managed stocks and fisheries to those changes. This approach should better support West Coast fishing communities that depend on marine fishery resources. It is ongoing in 2019.

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