

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP REPORT ON
THE RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS UPDATE

On February 23, Mr. John DeVore briefed the Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) and the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) on the proposed structure for the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Pacific Council's) Research and Data Needs Database. Based on his briefing, we reviewed the [North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Research Priorities Database](#), which Mr. DeVore had mentioned could serve as a model for the Pacific Council's database.

The Research and Data Needs Database is intended to meet the requirement of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) that fishery management councils: "...develop, in conjunction with the scientific and statistical committee, **multi-year research priorities** for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research..." [16 U.S.C. 1852(h)(7), emphasis added].

The EWG supports moving the Council's [list of research and data needs](#) from a quite long multi-page document into an electronic database. However, the example North Pacific Council's research priorities database is not actually prioritized, which we do not recommend for the Pacific Council. The EWG recommends the Council set a process for reviewing and prioritizing its research and data needs that is informed by recommendations from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and other advisory bodies. That review process should result in a shorter and more tractable list of research priorities to be entered into the new database. The EWG also asked what APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) would be available to allow queries.

Among the questions Mr. DeVore asked his listeners on February 23 was: *Should research priorities be determined more than once every five years?* If the list of research priorities is significantly slimmed, more frequent review might be both possible and useful to the Council. The review schedule might be tailored for the schedules of the fishery management/ecosystem plans so that research priority reviews occur at times appropriate to those plans. For example, the EWG and EAS might review ecosystem science research priorities annually in March, when we are already scheduled to review proposals for new SSC Ecosystem Subcommittee review topics for the ecosystem status report. Fishery management plan research priority reviews might be scheduled to coincide with those species groups' science review processes, such as choices of species for stock assessments or season-setting technical reviews.