

Agenda Item I.3.a
Supplemental EWG Presentation 1
March 2021



Agenda Item I.3, Fishery Ecosystem Plan Update

Ecosystem Workgroup Report Summary

EWG Reports March 2021

- Report 1: draft FEP Chapters 3 and 4
- Report 2: draft outline for stand-alone policy priorities document
- Report 3: draft outline for FEP Chapter 5

2013 Fishery Ecosystem Plan Chapters

Chapter 1 - Introduction

March 2020

Chapter 2 - Objectives

March 2020

Chapter 3 – California Current Ecosystem Overview

September 2020

March 2021

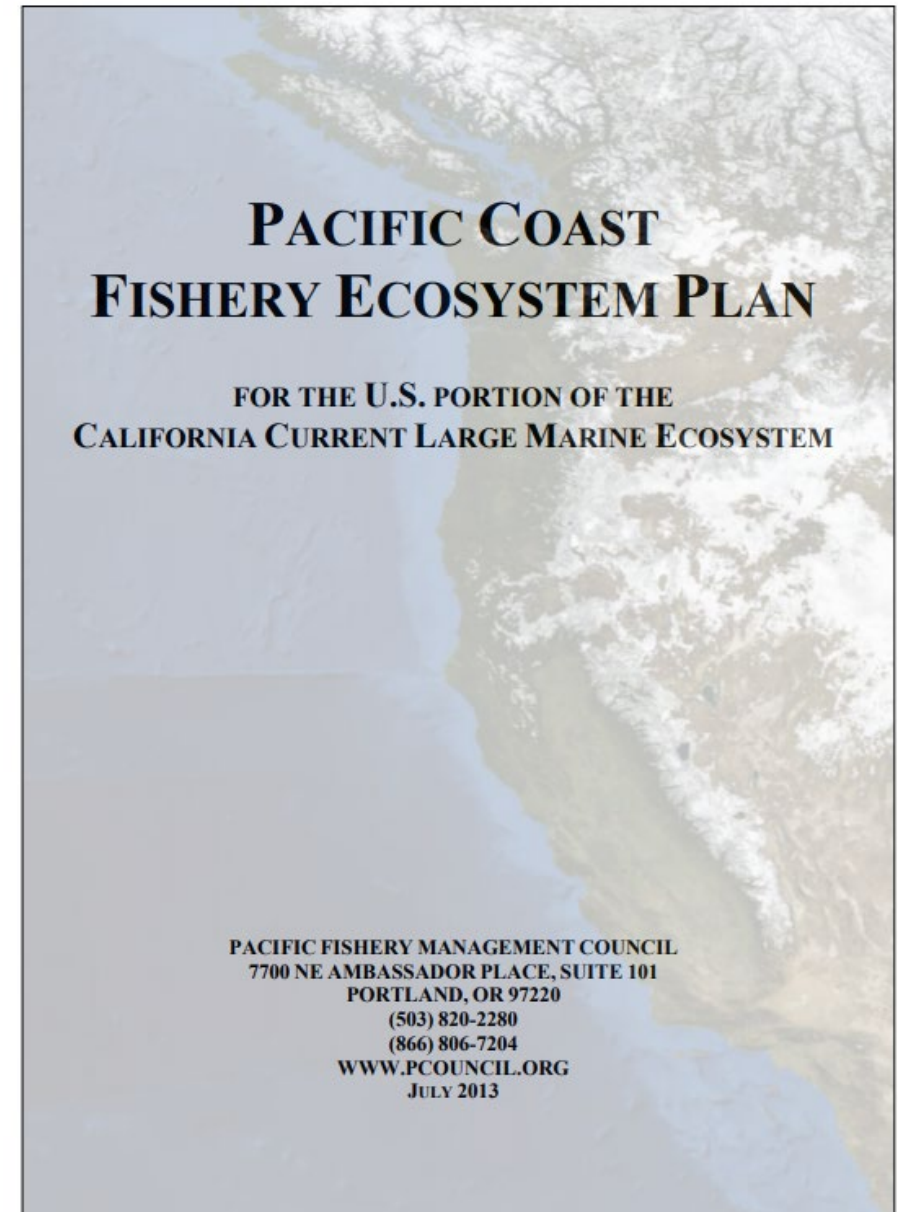
Chapter 4 – Addressing the Effects and Uncertainties of Human Activities and Environmental Shifts on the Marine Ecosystem

March 2021

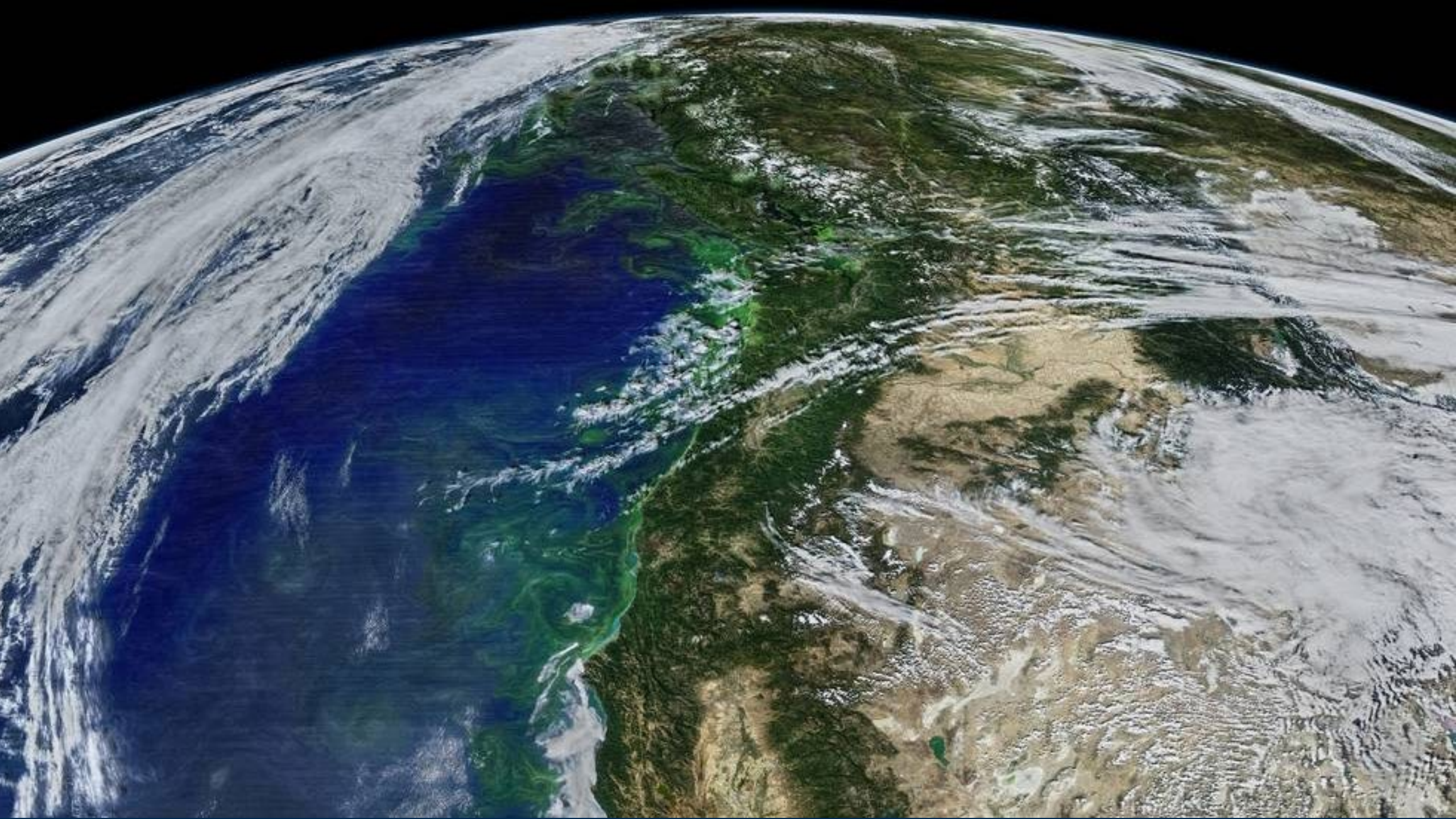
Chapter 5 – PFMC Policy Priorities for Ocean Resource Management

September 2021

Chapter 6 – Bringing Cross-FMP and Ecosystem Science Into the Council Process







ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP REPORT ON THE COUNCIL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT ON OFFSHORE NON-FISHING ACTIVITIES

At the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council's or PMFC) September 2020 meeting, the Council asked that the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) draft a stand-alone guidance document discussing the Council's priorities for federal and state agencies analyzing or permitting non-fishing activities in the California Current Ecosystem. The Council directed that the EWG excerpt Chapter 5 of the existing Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP,) *PFMC Policy Priorities for Ocean Resource Management*, to serve as the baseline for the stand-alone guidance document.

For this March 2021 meeting, the EWG updated the outline for this new stand-alone document from the outline we had provided as Chapter 5 in [Agenda Item E.2., Attachment 1](#), based on comments received at the September 2020 meeting and initial ideas discussed in the winter workshops for the Climate and Communities Initiative. This report is being submitted to the Council's advance briefing book in early February. Once we have had more opportunities to review the results of those workshops, we may have further recommendations for revising the outline and contents of this document.

The EWG would appreciate Council guidance on:

- Whether the Council prefers this document continue as a stand-alone document outside the FEP; and,
- Whether the Council has suggestions for modifying the outline before the EWG drafts the full document.

Finally, the EWG notes that this draft guidance document may be useful to the Council's discussions under Agenda Item C.2., Marine Planning Update.

Pacific Fishery Management Council Guidance on Agency Activities in the California Current Ecosystem

The Council's policies for CCE resources address species, habitat types, fisheries, and ecological functions of particular concern to, or that may strongly drive, the Council's work. Unlike the FEP, this document is not intended to guide future Council work, but to provide external entities with guidance on Council priorities for the CCE's status and functions. External entities that may be interested in the Council's ecosystem-based management planning process and in the Council's cumulative management priorities may include Federal or state agencies conducting activities within the CCE, regional and national marine use planning bodies, and international fishery and ocean resource management bodies.

The Pacific Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils authorized by the MSA and is responsible for the management of fisheries of the living marine resources of the U.S. EEZ (3-200 nm) off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. In addition to having management responsibility for 100+ species of fish and their associated fisheries of the U.S. West Coast EEZ, the Pacific Council is responsible for reviewing non-fishing activities that may affect EFH for Council-managed species. Cumulatively, EFH for Council-managed species extends throughout the U.S. West Coast EEZ, and inshore of the EEZ to encompass salmon rivers as far east as Idaho. Council priorities for its managed species may be found within its four FMPs. In general, the Council is interested in and may have concerns with any projects that have potential adverse effects on living marine resources, the biological diversity of marine life, the functional integrity of the marine ecosystem, or to important marine habitat or associated biological communities.

1 Non-Fishing Activities of Particular Interest for their Potential Effects on the Marine Environment

The Council is concerned with the potential effects of non-fishing activities that could directly or indirectly harm or kill any of its managed species at any of their life stages, which are identified and discussed in detail in the FMPs. Included in this section will be descriptions of non-fishing human activities (current and future) that may negatively affect Council managed species (similar to Table 4.2 in draft Chapter 4, EWG Report 1).

2 Species of Particular Interest for Protection from the Effects of Non-Fishing Activities

The Council has jurisdiction over fish, which the MSA defines as "finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal and plant life other than marine mammals and birds." NOAA and the USFWS administer recovery programs for all marine and anadromous species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, and administer protection programs for marine mammals under the MMPA. The USFWS manages protection programs for bird species, including seabirds, under the MBTA. The Council is concerned with the potential effects of non-fishing activities that could directly or indirectly harm or kill any of its managed species at any of their life stages, which are identified and discussed in detail in the FMPs. There are, however, some species and species groups that are likely to be more vulnerable to the effects of non-fishing activities on their life cycles and habitats.

Recommended Schedule

- 09/21: Council reviews complete draft FEP, recommends revisions, sends out for public review;
- 10/21 – 12/21: public review period
- 01/22: EWG final draft
- 03/22: Council adopts final FEP

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP REPORT ON THE FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN UPDATE

During the Ecosystem Workgroup's (EWG's) February 22-23, 2021 meeting, we discussed a draft outline for the final Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) chapter on ecosystem science in the Council process. On February 23, John DeVore briefed the EWG and the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel on the development of the Council's Research and Data Needs Database, which helped the EWG think about the types of projects and ideas that could be included in that database, versus the bigger picture discussion of science needs that could be provided in the final chapter of the FEP. We also discussed the various ecosystem and climate science documents and strategic planning processes within the agencies and commissions that participate in and support the Council process.

Below, we provide a draft outline of the final FEP chapter for review by the Council, its advisory bodies, and the public. The EWG's intent is to bring the Council a draft of the final chapter to the Council's September 2021 meeting, where the Council is tentatively scheduled to adopt the revised FEP. We are concerned that if the Council were to adopt the revised FEP in September 2021, Council advisory bodies and the public would not have an adequate opportunity to review the full draft revised FEP. Therefore, we recommend the Council consider an FEP adoption process similar to that used for the 2013 FEP:

- September 2021: EWG provides a complete draft FEP for review by Council, advisory bodies, and the public. Council receives comments and makes recommendations for immediate revisions to be made by the EWG in September-October 2021.
- October-December 2021: Council staff issues Public Review Draft FEP, with comments due by the end of December 2021.
- January-February 2022: EWG drafts final revisions to FEP for March 2022 briefing book.
- March 2022: Final Council adoption of FEP.

Chapter 5 Ecosystem Science in the Council Process

In the 2013 FEP, this chapter briefly addressed bringing ecosystem science into stock assessments and the annual ecosystem status report. The Council moved all of its recommendations on specific ecosystem science projects into the Research and Data Needs Document, which is now becoming a database (tentatively scheduled for discussion at the April 2021 Council meeting). The Introductory section of the new Chapter 5 would discuss our progress to date on bringing ecosystem science into the Council process and would discuss new or different opportunities for bringing ecosystem science into the Council process. This section would also discuss how the Council process can understand, interpret, and use near real-time information to make more rapid decisions based on changing environmental, biological, and social conditions. Additionally, this section would discuss when and how quickly we might react to new ecosystem information -- not all new ecosystem information needs immediate reactions, nor would the ecosystem or fishing communities necessarily benefit from reactive decision-making.