ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS
DATABASE UPDATE

The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) received a co-briefing with the ad-hoc Ecosystem Workgroup from Mr. John DeVore and discussed the Research and Data Needs Database. We appreciate the work by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff to develop an electronic database and continue to improve the Council's ability to communicate management-driven science needs to the larger academic and scientific communities. The Council is operating in an increasingly dynamic environment driven by both unprecedented physical changes (e.g., climate change) and direct human actions (e.g., expanding aquaculture, offshore wind development, etc.). These circumstances call for agile and rapidly responsive applied research and this database and improvements to the Research and Data Needs process will help achieve that.

Regarding database fields, we recommend adding a contact for the Principal Investigator (PI), project lead, or, where available, the project "champion" (Council staff, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service staff, SSC Chair, etc.) so that communication across research communities and/or the interested public can be better facilitated. We also recommend adding a project or research goal field so that the purpose of the research in advancing Council decision-making is clearly articulated, and a length of time field so that the database audience can quickly understand the scope of a project and whether it is an on-going or a one-off project, and thus help in prioritization. Additionally, a "funded" category of the Research Status field, including the contact information of the PI undertaking the research, would be helpful for the Council to track progress and we note the importance of this field in general for the Council and other potential researchers to understand what types of projects are being executed or needed. We recommend that the Habitat Committee Priorities be included.

Regarding prioritization of research projects, the EAS thinks that this is crucial to the utility of the database, especially because the database includes 1000+ projects. The EAS endorses the approach suggested by the SSC. The EAS wonders if there is a method for linking prioritization of research to Council Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) goals and objectives and notes that overall linking to FMPs and the FEP is conceptually useful; this could be accomplished as an additional field within the database.

Regarding timing of Council review, we understand that there are competing tradeoffs with timing, such as the value of Council floor time, the pace of research generally, and the accelerating pace of environmental change. With this in mind, we recommend a full Council review every two to three years providing such reviews occur expeditiously.

Finally, we note that the ultimate utility of any Research and Data Needs product is its ability to reach potential researchers. We recommend that, in addition to current distribution, this database be advertised within Sea Grant Request for Proposals and be placed prominently on the Council's website.

PFMC
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