

## GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON THE FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVE WORKPLAN

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the advanced briefing book materials and received an overview from Dr. Kit Dahl of Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff. In addition, several members of the team attended the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) webinar on March 1, 2023. The GMT's understanding is that the Council plans to bring ecosystem and climate information into the biennial groundfish harvest specification and management measure decision making processes. The GMT thanks the EWG for the opportunity to walk through the report and to ask questions in advance of this meeting, facilitating GMT discussion on this topic.

The EWG report describes a process to implement Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative 2.1, a new ecosystem initiative that the Council adopted in September 2022 ([Agenda Item H.2.a, EWG Report 1, March 2023](#)). As outlined in the EWG report, the objectives of this initiative are to identify a need and determine when and how ecosystem and climate information can be incorporated into Council management.

### **Petrale Sole Risk Table**

To begin implementing this new initiative, the EWG proposes using petrale sole as a demonstration species, with a risk assessment table as a starting point. The EWG anticipates collaborating with the GMT on this pilot effort. The GMT reviewed its current schedule and anticipates availability for a work session with the EWG but thinks more than 1-2 hours may be needed if the task is to both review a draft risk table and evaluate petrale sole against the risk table criteria.

### **Framework to Integrate Ecosystem and Climate Information**

To continue integrating ecosystem and climate information into the management of groundfish, the EWG identified the need for a framework to guide future Council selection of species or groups of species. Specific to groups of species, the EWG seeks advice from Advisory Bodies on preferred approaches for identifying appropriate species to group together. The GMT had difficulty identifying specific advice at this time, because there is uncertainty in the potential ecosystem tools (hereafter "tools") to be developed. Our advice would depend on the tools and how they are anticipated to be used.

Regarding timing, the GMT anticipates that preferred times for receiving ecosystem information may vary depending on what aspect of the assessment/management process the information is meant to inform. For example, future tools that might inform an assessment will need to be available for use sooner than a tool that informs Scientific and Statistical Committee scientific uncertainty advice or a Council risk policy decision. In addition, given that the intent of the pilot effort with petrale sole is to develop a pathway and inform an iterative framework, the GMT expects to gain insight on the optimal timeline of any future efforts.

Looking beyond the pilot effort, as new tools are developed, the GMT suggests that in addition to the utility of the tool, the workload and schedules of any parties that need to be involved (e.g., stock assessment authors) in the development/review of tools should be considered in developing the framework's timeline. At its webinar, the EWG shared the potential to have pre-vetted data in

the future and possibly automated reports, and the GMT sees significant benefit in such products relative to efficiency and workload.

PFMC  
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