

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVE WORKPLAN

The Habitat Committee (HC) discussed the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) request for Advisory Body guidance on elements of this Initiative, including which species to include now and in the future, and criteria for selecting species. The HC supports the EWG's recommendation to use Petrale sole as the demonstration species for the pilot project. The HC notes that salmon stocks for which habitat indicators have been developed would be good candidates as the next priority species or species group. The HC also discussed criteria for the draft planning matrix which is intended to help prioritize species for the next ecosystem and climate information reporting. The HC recommends the addition of a criterion for "Indicator Response" to identify how well species or species group trends can be explained by habitat indicators, or conversely, how well habitat indicators explain a species or species group trend/environmental response. The HC also discussed the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Risk classification table presented in the report (Table 1) and thinks this is a logical next step for informing stock assessment and management. The HC notes that Levels 2 and 3 would better indicate risk if indicators are weighted or selected based on the importance of indicators for the species or species group in the assessment. Finally, the HC recommends the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Science Centers support this initiative with species and ecosystem expertise, and the NMFS West Coast Region and the appropriate fisheries management staff from the states and Tribes support this initiative with season management expertise between April and September 2023.

PFMC
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