

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INITIATIVE 4: ECOSYSTEM AND CLIMATE INFORMATION - PROGRESS REPORT

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) thanks Dr. Kit Dahl, Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff, and the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) for their thinking on these issues and offers the following guidance and recommendations.

Before offering guidance on the topics up for discussion at this meeting, the GAP offers the following comments for consideration. In a world with perfect science, a structured process like that being developed by the EWG that provides actionable information for decision making based on the state of the ecosystem would be a tremendous asset to fishermen and the management process. Unfortunately, we don't live in that world. The GAP is concerned that we may not have enough information to reliably apply ecosystem information in the setting of catch limits and other management measures, and that moving forward with this process before we have reliable and widely agreed-upon information could result in negative unexpected consequences. The GAP recommends a retrospective analysis to assess whether the process is ready for use in management. Alternatively, the Council could compare EWG recommendations (e.g., high/medium/low) for select stocks to assessments and fishery results for a cycle or two in order to assess how well the process will in fact inform management.

Process for Choosing Species/Stocks/Groups to Receive Ecosystem and Climate Information

The GAP recommends inclusion of advisory body members on the multidisciplinary risk assessment teams being contemplated by the EWG.

Given timeline constraints, the proliferation of other important issues (e.g., wind energy), and challenges working through longstanding issues on the Council agenda, the GAP is concerned about the workload implications of the process outlined by the EWG.

While the GAP doesn't have specific input on the proposed meeting timelines, the GAP does recommend that the EWG schedule standalone meetings with advisory bodies outside of regular Council meetings to provide adequate opportunity for input. Specifically, if the March/September meeting cycle stands, the GAP recommends a stand-alone meeting after the September Council meeting that would focus on how the information might be used in harvest setting.

Appendix A

With regard to appendix A, the GAP agrees with the Coastal Pelagic Species Management (CPSMT) report ([Agenda Item F.1.a, Supplemental CPSMT Report 1](#)) recommending additional clarity on what the "high/medium/low" likelihoods refer to and further explanation of what they are based on.