

## GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INITIATIVE 4: ECOSYSTEM AND CLIMATE INFORMATION – PROGRESS REPORT

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) report on the ecosystem and climate information initiative ([Agenda Item F.1.a, EWG Report 1](#)) and draft risk assessment tables ([Agenda Item F.1.a Supplemental EWG Report](#)).

The EWG requested advisory body feedback on the fishery management plan (FMP)-specific figures illustrating the timing and potential points of inclusion (on-ramps) for ecosystem/climate information, with the aim of formalizing the process within the FMP-specific Council Operating Procedures (COP). The GMT thinks that Figure 1 of [Agenda Item F.1.a, EWG Report 1](#) is useful for understanding potential groundfish on-ramps and could inform a new COP, but the red arrow at June (stock assessment prioritization Final Preferred Action) does not seem to align with the point at which ecosystem information would be introduced to inform stock assessment prioritization if that is the intent of the red arrow. This information would ideally come in at the even-year March Council meeting to be considered during the stock assessment prioritization Preliminary Preferred Action. The GMT also notes that the figure may not include all entry points and does not currently evaluate the relative challenges with each. The GMT anticipates that as we gain experience with incorporating ecosystem/climate information into the groundfish harvest setting process, the COP may require additional modification.

The GMT appreciates the EWG request to meet before the November 2023 Council Meeting. The GMT thinks that meeting with the EWG and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) before November is essential to provide critical feedback and have questions answered, which would be better addressed during a meeting versus in multiple Advisory Body reports. This timing is necessary for the GMT to consider whether and how the pilot risk tables for petrale sole and sablefish could be used to inform management given that the risk tables will be reviewed by the full Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in November 2023. The GMT suggests that this GAP/GMT/EWG meeting take place during the GMT October 16-20, 2023 meeting, which will be virtual.

The GMT seeks Council guidance on workload expectations for the GMT with regard to using the petrale sole and sablefish risk tables to inform 2025-26 harvest specifications and management measures, balancing those expectations with existing harvest specifications workload. In general, the GMT also seeks clarity on whether there are existing pathways to use the risk table information to inform harvest specifications or whether new pathways will need to be developed in the FMP.

The GMT is willing to work on the development of future risk tables as proposed, however, this constitutes new work and it is not on the Council/GMT workload prioritization list. The GMT would appreciate the Council clearly articulating its intention for the GMT. In addition, The Nature Conservancy is scheduled to host two proposed workshops in January 2024 that would set the stage for use of climate information in decision making and identify on-ramps in fishery management processes. The best time to maximize GMT participation in developing a formal process for incorporating ecosystem information is after January because of the harvest specifications deadlines that take place mid-January and the GMT overwinter meeting slated for January 29-February 2, 2024.