



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 13, 2024
TO: Habitat Committee and Interested Persons
FROM: Mr. Kerry Griffin, Habitat Staff Officer
SUBJECT: March 2024 Council Meeting Materials

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet in person March 6 – 11, 2024, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Fresno Convention Center, 2233 Ventura Street, Fresno, CA. The Council meeting will also be broadcast via live stream. The Habitat Committee (HC) will convene in person, in the Tioga Room beginning on Tuesday, March 5 – Wednesday, March 6. Other ancillary meetings will be conducted via a combination of online and in-person formats as noted in the Schedule of Ancillary Meetings in the Detailed Agenda (A.3). Instructions for joining online meetings will be posted to the March Council meeting [webpage](#). The HC will consider several relevant topics (below) and may develop supplemental reports for Council consideration.

Current Habitat Issues (D.1)

The HC will consider habitat-related issues that may be of interest to the Council and will develop a supplemental HC Report for Council consideration. The supplemental HC report is developed primarily from the HC member updates and is designed to alert the Council of activities or issues they should be aware of, such as upcoming development projects that may affect fisheries habitat, or updates on issues previously considered by the Council. The HC may recommend a particular action such as writing a letter or other communication on relevant issues.

Klamath Dam Removal Update (C.3)

The decommissioning of four Klamath River dams began in 2023, with drawdowns and deconstruction continuing in 2024. There are implications of the dam removals related to stock assessments, management frameworks, data collection, monitoring, and habitat issues. Jim Simondet, the Klamath Branch Supervisor from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), will provide an update to the Council on the status of the Klamath Dam removal project. The HC should consider and discuss the progress of dam removal and be prepared to highlight any habitat-related concerns or unforeseen issues that should be brought for the Council's attention.

Marine Planning Update (E.3)

The Council's Ad Hoc Marine Planning Committee (MPC) met online January 23, 2024, to hear updates on offshore wind energy activities on the West Coast. MPC Report 1 includes updates

from the states, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the West Coast Ocean Alliance, and a Tribal update. This report is largely informational and includes upcoming events and other information. The HC and the MPC collaborated on a draft comment letter on the proposed Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the five California offshore wind leases. The public comment period closes February 20, 2024. Other OSW or Aquaculture issues may be brought forward by the MPC as well.

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: Coral Restoration and Research Plan – Range of Alternatives and Preliminary Preferred Alternative

At the September 2023 Council meeting, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) proposed five areas for deep sea coral research and restoration in the Gulf of the Farallones and Monterey Bay NMS that would be closed to groundfish bottom longline and pot gear (H.2.a, ONMS Report 1, September 2023). The Council proposed moving forward two areas with three sites (Ascension Canyon/Ano Nuevo and Sur Ridge) for consideration and analysis that would prohibit all bottom contact gear. The HC should consider the proposed Range of Alternatives and any habitat-related benefits or impacts.

California Current Ecosystem Status Report (H.1)

The California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team has produced the 2023-2024 California Current Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) and appendices. There will be an online presentation on this year's report on February 27 (see the Council [website](#) for details). One of the appendices is the ecosystem indicators salmon stoplight tables, which the HC will discuss separately on March 5, 10:30 a.m. The annual report highlights trends in physical, biological, and socioeconomic components of the ecosystem. Since the ESR is informational, advisory bodies need not comment on it, although in previous years advisory bodies have made recommendations for improvements to the indicators or the addition of new ones to the report.

Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative 4 – Progress Review (H.2)

The purpose of Initiative 4 is to develop onramps for integrating ecosystem and climate information into Council fishery management plan decision making. Since September 2023 the EWG met with the Groundfish Management and Coastal Pelagic Species management teams and advisory subpanels to solicit further input on integrating climate and ecosystem information into those processes. Also, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Ecosystem and Groundfish Subcommittees reviewed the risk assessment methodology and application presented by the EWG. At this meeting, the HC should review the work completed to date and make further recommendations on integrating ecosystem and climate information into Council FMP management processes.

Climate and Communities Initiative Review and Prioritize Tasks (H.3)

The Council completed the Climate and Communities Initiative (CCI) in September 2021, which focused on a scenario planning process to elicit ideas on how to mitigate climate change effects to Council fisheries. Potential follow-up activities emerging from the Initiative were identified. The Ad Hoc Ecosystem Workgroup has submitted a report summarizing its revisitation of materials produced during the scenario planning process to produce a more comprehensive list of potential tasks.

Under this agenda item the Council has an opportunity to consider whether to prioritize any tasks for future work. Advisory bodies may wish to submit their recommendations on which tasks to prioritize.

Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning (J.3)

The HC should review upcoming Council agendas and the Council's Year-At-A-Glance and discuss any important issues that should be added or clarified. The HC should also note which meetings are scheduled to be in person versus online and identify any concerns or conflicts.

Habitat Committee Closed Session

The HC will hold elections for Chair and Vice Chair, to serve the remainder of 2024.

KFG:rdd

Enclosures include:

1. Agenda Item A– Council Meeting Agenda and Executive Director's Report
2. Agenda Item B.1 – Comments on Non-Agenda Items
3. Agenda Item C.3 - Klamath Dam Removal Update
4. Agenda Item D – Habitat Issues
5. Agenda Item E.2 - Office of National Marine Sanctuaries: Coral Restoration and Research Plan – Range of Alternatives and Preliminary Preferred Alternative
6. Agenda Item E.3 – Marine Planning
7. Agenda Item H – Ecosystem Management
8. Agenda Item J – Administrative Matters
9. Agenda Item I.5 – Highly Migratory Species
10. Informational Reports
11. General Information and Council Roster

PFMC

02/06/24