

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FISHERY ECOSYSTEM
PLAN INITIATIVE 4 – PROGRESS REVIEW

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) recommends operational testing to explore the four pathways (management on-ramps) identified for how and when risk tables could be used by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Council in setting harvest levels. From the SSC Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) and Groundfish Subcommittees (GFSC) report ([September 2023, \(SSC-EBM/GFSC Report on the Fishery Ecosystem Plan's Ecosystem and Climate Information\)](#)) these pathways are:

1. Informing the choice of scientific uncertainty (σ) when an assessment is adopted
2. Informing the policy choice of risk tolerance (P^*) when an assessment is adopted
3. Informing how σ and/or P^* might vary over the course of a projection interval between assessments
4. Direct specification of the acceptable biological catch

The GAP would like to see what the process and outcomes would look like for all four pathways, laid out more clearly, with examples. This was also proposed by the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team (CCIEA) in their report to the SSC under Agenda Item H.1 at this meeting ([Agenda Item H.1.a, Supplemental CCIEA Team Report 3, March 2024](#)). After seeing these examples, we could understand the potential process and impacts and then we can provide additional feedback.

In addition, the GAP is interested in highlighting some real and/or retrospective examples for ecosystem and climate information to be used in the setting of scientific uncertainty and harvest policy, so we can see how or whether this information could have predicted some real-life scenarios that played out. For example, if the Council were to look back to when the shortbelly population expanded and moved north, is this something that this ecosystem and climate information could have anticipated as a possible outcome? And if so, how would that have worked through our management process? Can we get to some numerical values of what these impacts would have been? How will the SSC determine how large or small the changes to σ may be? Will there be a prescribed change based on a factor? If we were able to apply this concept to past examples such as sablefish and shortbelly where we know the present day outcome and could go back and see how this information would have impacted the management outcome/harvest levels, this would be very useful in helping GAP members and others more clearly identify the real world utility of how this will work in the Council process.