

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS

The Habitat Committee (HC) met with Dan Holland (Scientific and Statistical Committee) to discuss the draft Research and Data Needs document. The HC reviewed habitat-related aspects of the document and has the following comments and suggested edits, as noted by italics and strikethrough.

First, the Habitat Committee wishes to express its appreciation that Habitat and Spatial Management is its own priority/challenge within the framework. The HC also agrees that the initial four items listed represent important research and data needs within the category. Work directed towards those needs will improve our ability to classify and assess fish habitat and better understand the role of habitat in fisheries productivity.

The HC does suggest revisions to the second bullet on the Habitat and Spatial Management challenge list so that it reads as follows:

- Identify environmental (e.g., spatially-refined indices of ecosystem state) and ecological (e.g., occurrence of structure-forming invertebrates, *prey availability*) sources of variation *and change in habitats, and the effects of those changes* ~~in the distributions of~~ on federally-managed species.

The HC recognizes that there is often overlap between Ecosystem Dynamics considerations (Challenge #5) and Habitat and Spatial Management considerations (Challenge #9). To better integrate these two, we present for consideration edits to the Ecosystem Dynamics definition to reflect this overlap, as follows:

- 5. Ecosystem dynamics: The effects of a changing ecosystem *and habitats* raise challenges for fishery science and management. Continued efforts to account for ecosystem and *habitat change* can involve approaches such as collecting diet data, developing ecosystem *models and habitat models*, evaluating the use of ecological indicators in stock assessments and identifying environmental thresholds.

Finally, the HC recommends that the original Research and Data Needs database be maintained to allow continued access to specific identified research needs to improve Council managed fisheries.