

September 2026



H.1 – Proposed Protocol for Reviewing Ecosystem Component Species and Identifying Stocks in Need of Conservation and Management

Purpose

Propose a framework to monitor, review, and evaluate ecosystem component (EC) species in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (Groundfish FMP)



EC species

“stocks that a Council or the Secretary [of Commerce] has determined do not require conservation and management, but desire to list in an FMP in order to achieve ecosystem management objectives”

1. *non-target species or stock;*
2. *not be determined to be subject to overfishing, approaching overfished, or overfished;*
3. *not be likely to become subject to overfishing or overfished, according to the best available information, in the absence of conservation and management measures; and*
4. *not generally be retained for sale or personal use.*



Intended Outcome

Process to review EC species on a biennial basis and provide a checkpoint to perform further analysis, as needed.

May entail additions to the Council Operating Procedures (COPs) as well as Council guidance to the GMT and Council staff to establish the inaugural checkpoint.



Proposed Report Framework

1. Standardized, biennial reporting from the GMT
2. Involvement of the SSC, GAP, and others during the checkpoint
3. Council will determine whether species require full evaluation via 10 Factors and/or limited management measures
4. March of even years, additional review in June, Sept, as needed
5. Detailed in COP 9



Proposed GMT Role

- Provide standardized, biennial reporting to determine if there have been changes to mortality, targeting, retention, or risk of overfishing/overfished status for EC species
 - Determine appropriate metrics for analysis
 - Consider potential efficiencies
- Flag species requiring additional review for Council consideration
 - Species being targeted
 - Species at risk of overfishing or an overfished condition
 - Highlight species as needed

EC Report

- Standard established, be efficient!
- Consistent metrics
 - Total and average annual mortality and landings
 - Change over time
 - Discard mortality
 - Risk of overfishing
 - Ex-vessel revenue over time
- Consider NS 1 guidance – confirm non-target species
- No one-size-fits-all thresholds
- flag species requiring additional review
- Report may be added to over time

GAP Role

- Consider whether changes in fishery dynamics (targeting, retention) have changed for any EC species
- Focus on GMT-flagged species, any additional from their experiences
- Provide supplemental report



SSC Role

- Fulfill parallel steps already established in COPs to provide input on stock definitions, including biological information, vulnerability

March of even years

Biennial GMT Report

- Summary of mortality and catch of EC species
- Flag species of concern, species requiring 10F analysis



Supplemental GAP Report

- Note changes in fishery dynamics, targeting, retention affecting EC species



*June of even years
(as needed)*

10 Factor Analysis

- Analyze species flagged for potential conservation and management need in the EEZ



*Sept of even years
(as needed)*

Council Action

- Action on EC species designation and stock definitions, as needed

Supplemental State & Tribal Reports

Flag notable changes in fishery affecting EC species

SSC Report

Review biological information to inform recommendations on stock definitions, as appropriate



Other Examples

(see Att. 1 Appendix B)

PFMC

- Big Skate
- 2025 GMT full EC species review

Other Regions

- Mid-Atlantic
- South Atlantic

Key Questions

Provide input on the proposed, expectations for what may be produced as a standardized report, (tentatively) beginning in March of 2028.

- How should mortality and landings be analyzed? (time series used, absolute numbers and/or change over time reported, statistics reported, comparison to reference points reported, specific statistics to analyze)
- Should any additional data points be reported?
- Are there any aspects of previous examples within the PFMC or other regions that were particularly useful to carry on going forward?
- Are there any thresholds that should automatically trigger further evaluations or other action?
- How does the timing, as currently proposed, fit within the biennial harvest specifications process and the GMT workload? Are there any adjustments that should be made?
- Are there any other considerations for improving efficiency and minimizing workload?



Council Action

Recommend a Review Process for Incorporation in the Council Operating Procedures, Provide Guidance, as Appropriate

Tasks

- Recommendation of a process for inclusion of COPs (higher level)
- Guidance on the details of how this is implemented, including standardized reporting