

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON THE CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the briefing book materials on the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Climate and Communities Initiative, and members of the GMT participated in the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) webinar on August 21, 2018. Members of the GMT also participated in the May 2018 workshop sponsored by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The GMT discussed this agenda item during our webinar on August 23, 2018 and provides our input below.

Given the very limited amount of time the GMT had to discuss this issue prior to the September Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, we did not attempt to address each of the questions posed by the EWG. Instead, the GMT focused our discussion on this initiative on the difficulty of implementing meaningful actions in response to climate change. At the TNC workshop, members of the GMT heard overwhelmingly that management flexibility in a timely manner is necessary to adapt to a changing climate. However, it is difficult to understand exactly how to use the extensive information within the FEP, and annual California Current Ecosystem reports (including ecosystem indicators), to specifically address a changing climate.

The TNC workshop and EWG webinar (and further explained in EWG Report 1, [Agenda Item G.3.a, September 2018](#)) suggested the concept of scenario planning to explore climate change issues. The GMT thinks scenario planning would help highlight specific areas for improvement in our climate-related data, our process, and our management abilities to identify how the Council can be more effective at improving the flexibility and responsiveness of management actions to near-term climate shift and long-term climate change. This management flexibility will not only help fishery participants and communities, but may also ensure long-term sustainability of fishery resources. **The GMT recommends the Council request the EWG to provide one or two detailed scenarios for the March 2019 Council meeting to better understand how the concept would function in reality.** During our work on the yelloweye rockfish rebuilding plan, the GMT began to delve into this idea. Appendix B of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery 2019-2020 Harvest Specifications and Management Measures ([Agenda Item E.4, Attachment 5, June 2018](#)) may provide information to help inform potential impacts of climate change on West Coast fisheries.

Finally, the GMT notes that the EWG recommends updating the comprehensive list of management measures by coordinating with each of the fishery management plan management teams. If the Council wishes to do that, we recommend that this task be considered relative to other GMT work planned for the winter, as we expect to be working on mitigation measures for seabirds, salmon bycatch, and any off-year science improvements.