

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN (FEP) FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

As noted in the November 2018 Habitat Committee (HC) report (and noted by the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG)), a major update proposed for the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) would require significant resources and staff time from Science Center and climate scientists currently working on Climate and Community Initiative scenarios as well as Council advisory bodies. Functionally, the annual CCIEA Report is a reasonable surrogate for updating much of the information in chapters 3-6, as the “full update” proposes.

The HC therefore recommends the Council adopt the second option described by the EWG (FEP “Vision Update”), and that the EWG re-evaluate the need for a major update in five years. The Vision Update could include a summary of the use of the FEP by stakeholders and agencies.

If the Council chooses the “full update” option, the HC recommends that the update include an assessment of the uses for climate vulnerability information in Council management actions and assessments, to be placed in Section 3, which now characterizes habitat by structural components. If changes in ocean chemistry parameters (such as dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature and aragonite saturation) are affected by climate change, and these changes exceed a species’ tolerance, this changes the species’ functional habitat. Framing these vulnerable environmental factors in a habitat context would create a connection to the Council’s essential fish habitat (EFH) mandate and could help incorporate climate change planning into FMP-EFH review processes and in EFH consultations.

PFMC
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