

ECOSYSTEM PLAN DEVELOPMENT TEAM REPORT ON THE COUNCIL FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN (FEP) DEVELOPMENT

At its November 2011 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) directed the Ecosystem Plan Development Team (EPDT) to continue drafting a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) and to develop a draft outline for an annual state of the ecosystem report (Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 2). At that meeting, the Council adopted a tentative schedule, depending on other Council scheduling priorities, of reviewing draft versions of the FEP in June 2012 and November 2012, and of adopting a final plan at its March 2013 meeting. Our main report, Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 1, is a draft FEP that has been updated and revised since November 2011 as follows:

Chapter 1, Introduction, includes: the Purpose and Need statement the Council adopted at its June 2011 meeting in Section 1.1; an explanation of how the document is organized at Section 1.2; the schedule and process for developing the FEP at Section 1.3, revised based on the Council's direction during its November 2011 discussion of the FEP; and a schedule and process for state-of-the-ecosystem reporting, also revised based on Council advice from November 2011. The EPDT report under this agenda item at Attachment 2, provides a draft outline for an annual state of the California Current Ecosystem (CCE) report.

Chapter 2, *Objectives*, has been revised and updated for this meeting. The EPDT had a detailed discussion of this chapter at its April 12, 2012, meeting, with much debate on how best to incorporate the many and varied comments provided by the Council, its advisory bodies, and the public.

Chapter 3, *The FEP's Geographic Area and the California Current Ecosystem (CCE)* has been completely revised for this June 2012 meeting. In drafting this chapter, the EPDT's goal was to describe the CCE from a broad variety of disciplines, giving readers a cross-Fishery Management Plan (FMP) perspective on the organisms and fisheries of interest to the Council. We used Link's (2010) "general list of issues that need to be considered for implementing ecosystem considerations into fisheries management" for initial inspiration in outlining the chapter. We tried to provide a level of detail that would allow the chapter to serve as a big picture discussion of the CCE that could be both used as background in Council analytical documents, and used by new participants in the Council process to familiarize themselves with the CCE as a whole, rather than just with its many and varied parts. A few sections of Chapter 3 are incomplete or missing, with the most significant being discussions of recreational fisheries (3.4.2.2) and of fish receivers and processors (3.4.2.3). The EPDT anticipates drafting those sections within the coming months, using the commercial fisheries discussion (3.4.2.1) as a model, to the extent that data availability and confidentiality requirements allow. Over the longer term, the FEP and the annual state-of-the-ecosystem report would become online resources, to be available for a variety of public education and analytical purposes.

The EPDT plans to draft Chapter 4, *Cumulative Effects and Uncertainties of Environmental Shifts and Human Activities*, for Council review in November 2012. Chapter 4 is intended to consider how the Council conservation and management programs interact with each other across FMPs, and to look at the large-scale and cumulative effects of fisheries management. For example, the Council could look at spatial management issues across FMPs to determine whether fishing areas or marine protected areas for different FMPs conflict or harmonize with each other, or the Council could look at whether regulations under its different FMPs combine to create safety conflicts for fishery participants. The EPDT provided an example of how Chapter 4 might address a cross-FMP issue in its report for Agenda Item G.1.b, Further Protection for Currently Unmanaged Forage Species, at Option 2 on pages 3-4 of that report.

The EPDT plans to draft Chapter 5, *PFMC Policy Priorities for Ocean Resource Management*, for Council review in November 2012. Chapter 5 is intended to provide the Council with a venue for a broad discussion of its priorities for West Coast resources. The EPDT plans to focus on human activities that might affect non-fisheries mortality of Council-managed species or fisheries access to managed stocks. Federal agencies outside of the Council process look to the Council and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for guidance on priorities for their analyses on the potential effects of their proposed actions within the Exclusive Economic Zone on the environment. Chapter 5 would discuss the Council's cross-FMP issues of concern, so as to characterize Council priorities for living marine resource management over the near- and long-term. For example, projects proposing placing a permanent structure anchored to the ocean floor (regardless of the purpose of that structure) might be discouraged from citing that structure in an area that serves as both essential fish habitat for a rebuilding rockfish and as critical habitat for an endangered or threatened salmon species.

The EPDT has not updated Chapter 6, *Bringing Cross-FMP and Ecosystem Science into the Council Process*, since November 2011. We intend to update that chapter for November 2012, at which time we would include any changes or updates made to the state-of-the-ecosystem report outline provided under Attachment 2 to this agenda item.

Link, J.S. *Ecosystem-based fisheries management: confronting tradeoffs*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. (See Table 4.1)

PFMC
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