

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN (FEP)

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from Dr. John Field about the documents and issues under Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) consideration. It appears the Ecosystem Plan Development Team is on the right track in developing an informational Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), as directed by the Council. The GAP reiterates our previous recommendation that the FEP should be an informational document that provides a basis to broaden the scope of Council decisions. The FEP should not create new regulatory authorities at this time.

In addition to information currently provided in the draft FEP, the GAP recommends adding information on natural events that could disturb ecosystem components. For example, the draft FEP speaks to potential disturbance to bottom habitat caused by fishing activities. The GAP strongly notes that there are many natural occurrences that disturb or alter bottom habitat. Those natural events should be identified and accounted for in the FEP.

Relative to the question of the readiness of the draft FEP for adoption as a public review document, the GAP understands that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) might have several specific recommendations for changes to the current draft before the FEP is ready for prime time. The GAP supports further SSC review of the FEP prior to release for public review, if deemed necessary by the SSC. At this time, and taking into account any additional SSC review, the GAP thinks the FEP is on track for final adoption at the March 2013 Council meeting.

PFMC
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