



Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team

Research priorities as discussed at the Team's last meeting, March 2020

Kerim Aydin and Brad Harris briefed the Team on SSC interest in revising the process for developing Council research priorities, scheduled for discussion by the SSC in April 2020. The idea is to move away from the current, very detailed but lengthy and uneven database to a more holistic approach with top issues. Each Plan Team would be asked to provide its top 3-4 research priorities for SSC consideration. The Team also reviewed research priority presentations from the February 2020 SSC workshop.

Regarding the process itself, the Team notes that getting advice from each Plan Team is useful, but there is an inherent imbalance as only the Bering Sea has an FEP Team associated with it. Also, the Team sees value in organizing the top 10 list to separately acknowledge longer-term priorities as well as immediate, hot topic research needs. It was suggested in public comment that opportunities for input from tribes and community members should be provided at all levels, and the Team noted that this should be an onramp highlighted by the LKTKS Taskforce.

While the Team may want to consider an expanded process in the future, a good starting point is to ensure that the FEP priorities in the action modules are recognized. As such, the Team offers the following research priorities for April 2020:

- **LK and TK data collection.** *This research priority would support more structured and consistent sources of ecosystem information for use in annual reports (such as ESRs), specific fishery management actions, or future development of conceptual models, especially as there are some areas that are data poor. Ultimately want to build systematic onramps into the Council process, but need data to be able to populate those onramps also.*
- **Climate change: Develop predictive tools to inform management options related to resilience and adaptation.** *This research priority supports the work of the Climate Change Taskforce to identify and map out climate and environment change drivers and their likely response within fishery management, and specifically work on management options that provide a management response. Might support with groundfish specifications risk tables, and can also use these predictive tools to be able to evaluate the potential risk of different management responses related to potential scenarios.*
- **Conduct an assessment of the Council's Bering Sea management with respect to EBFM best practices.** *This research priority could be useful to help identify future needs and research.*

The Team considered identifying priorities related to other action modules or the Ecosystem Health Report Card, but ultimately determined that they were not yet ripe for inclusion.