

# Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

*DRAFT*

# Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

October 2018



North Pacific  
Fishery Management Council  
September 2018



# Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team

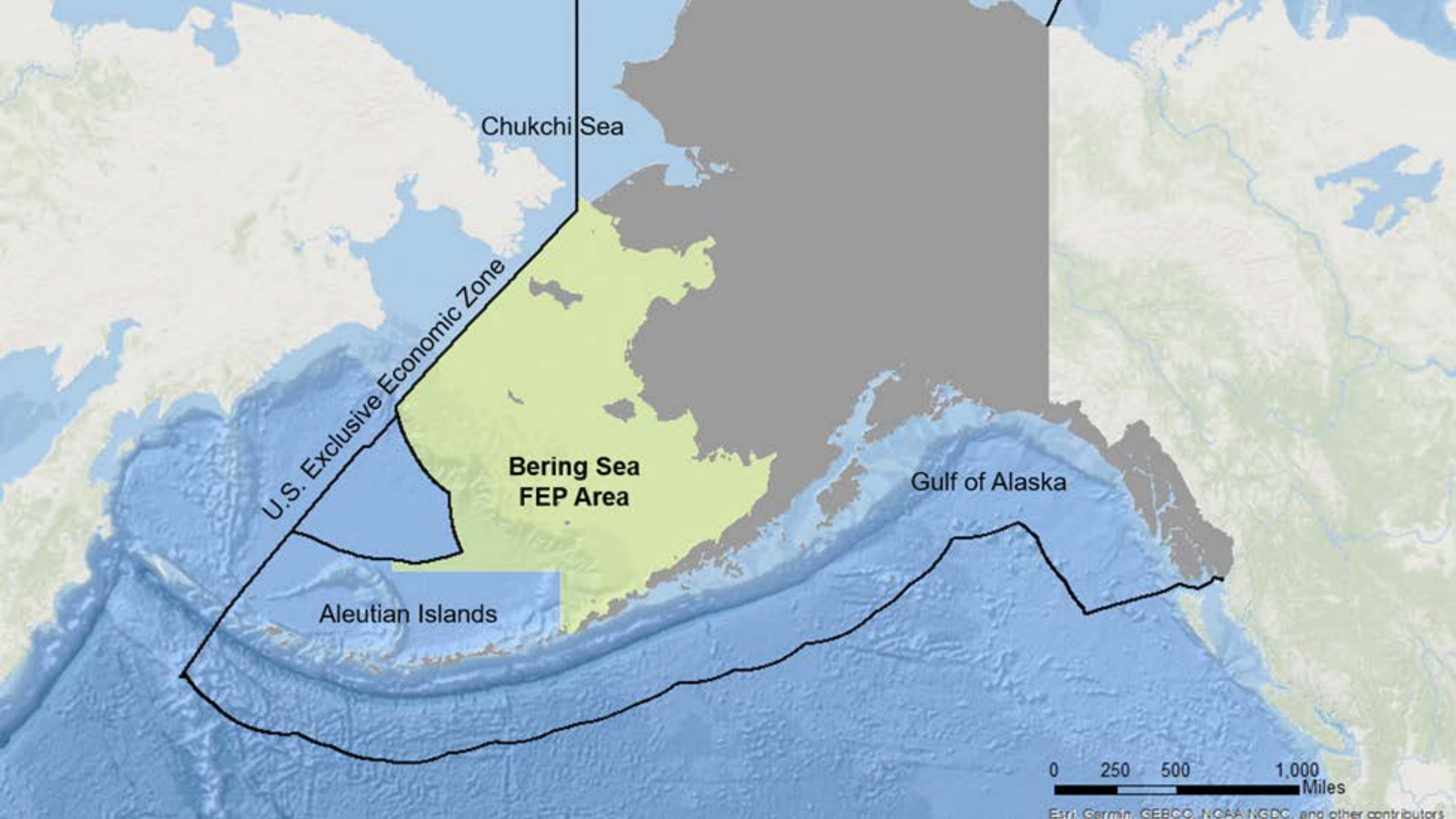
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# Outline for presentation

- What is a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP)?
- Why did the Council develop a FEP for the Bering Sea?
- Structure of the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan
  - What is the Core FEP and what are the Action Modules?
  - How is the Fishery Ecosystem Plan organized?
  - Draft Action Modules
  - Public involvement
  - Other content in the Fishery Ecosystem Plan
- How will the Fishery Ecosystem Plan change the Council process?
- What is the Council's action here today and at final action?



Chukchi Sea

U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone

**Bering Sea  
FEP Area**

Gulf of Alaska

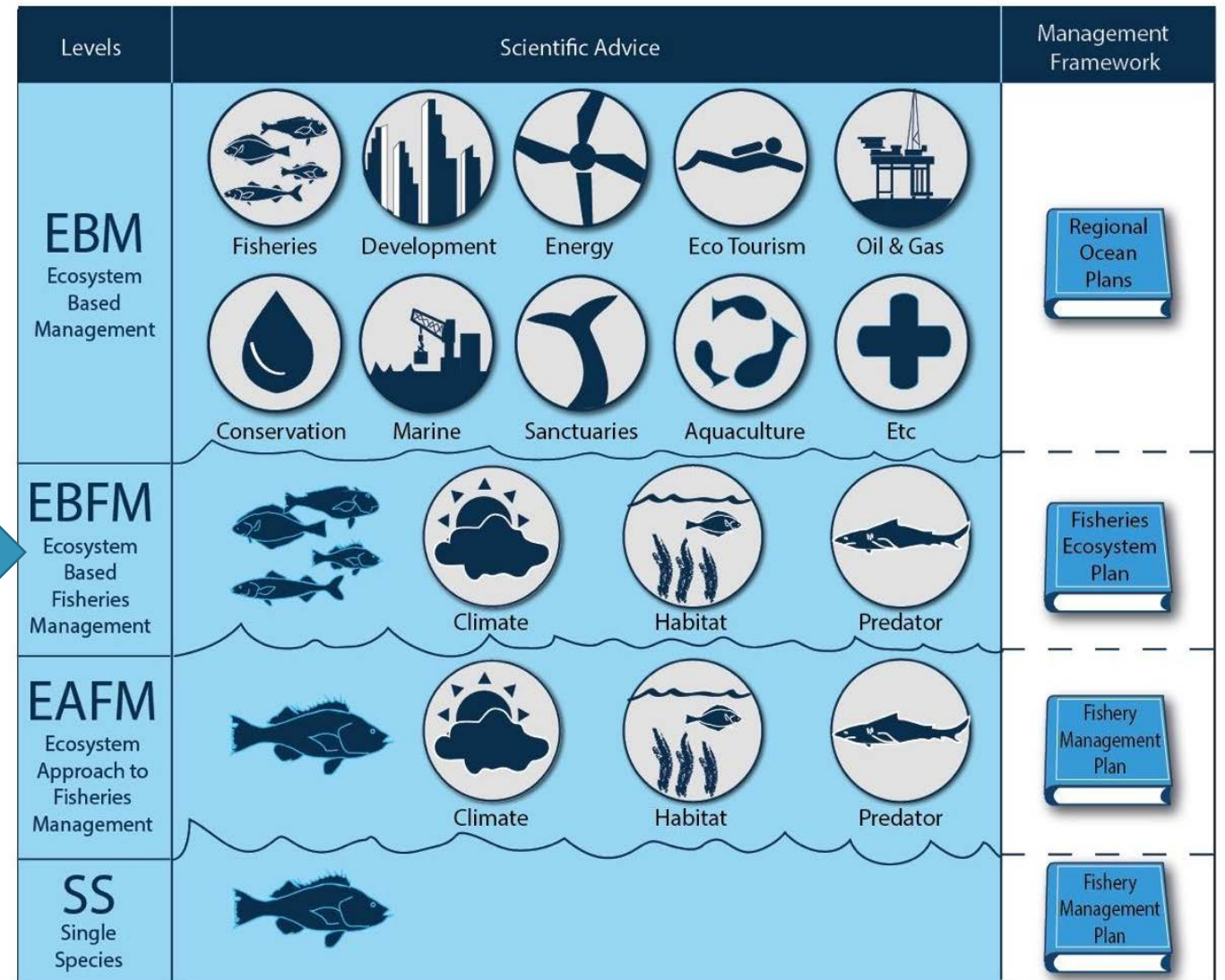
Aleutian Islands

0 250 500 1,000  
Miles

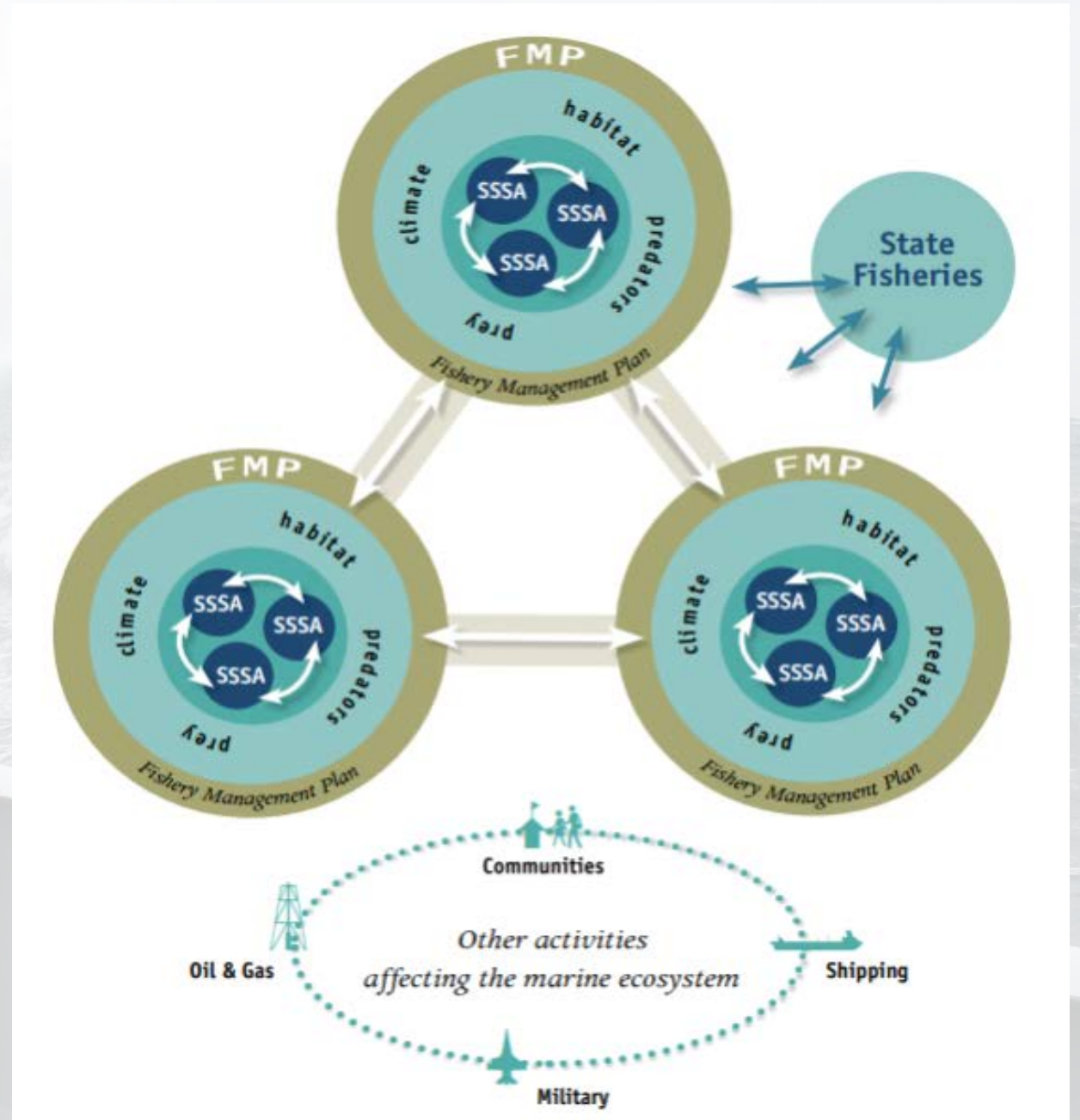
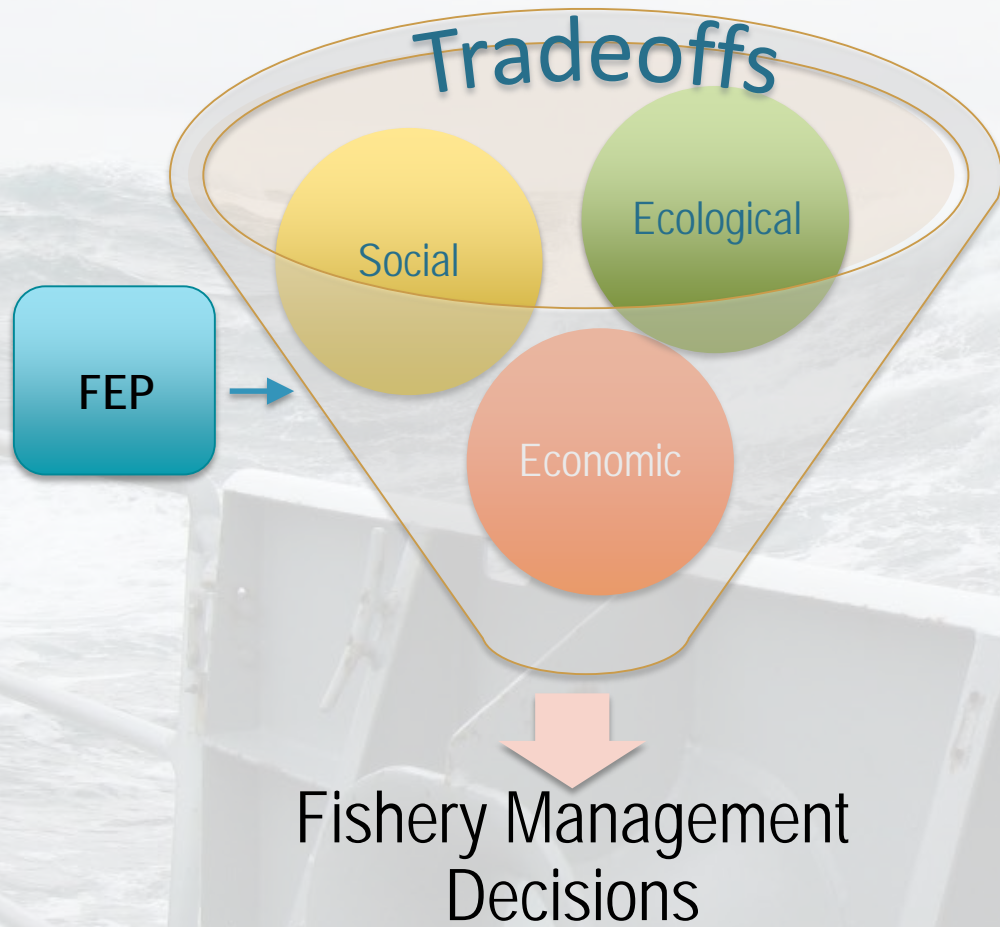
Esri, Garmin, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC, and other contributors

# What is a FEP?

- FEPs are a method for putting ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) into action
- EBFM considers interactions among ecological, economic, social and cultural components of a system



# What is a FEP?



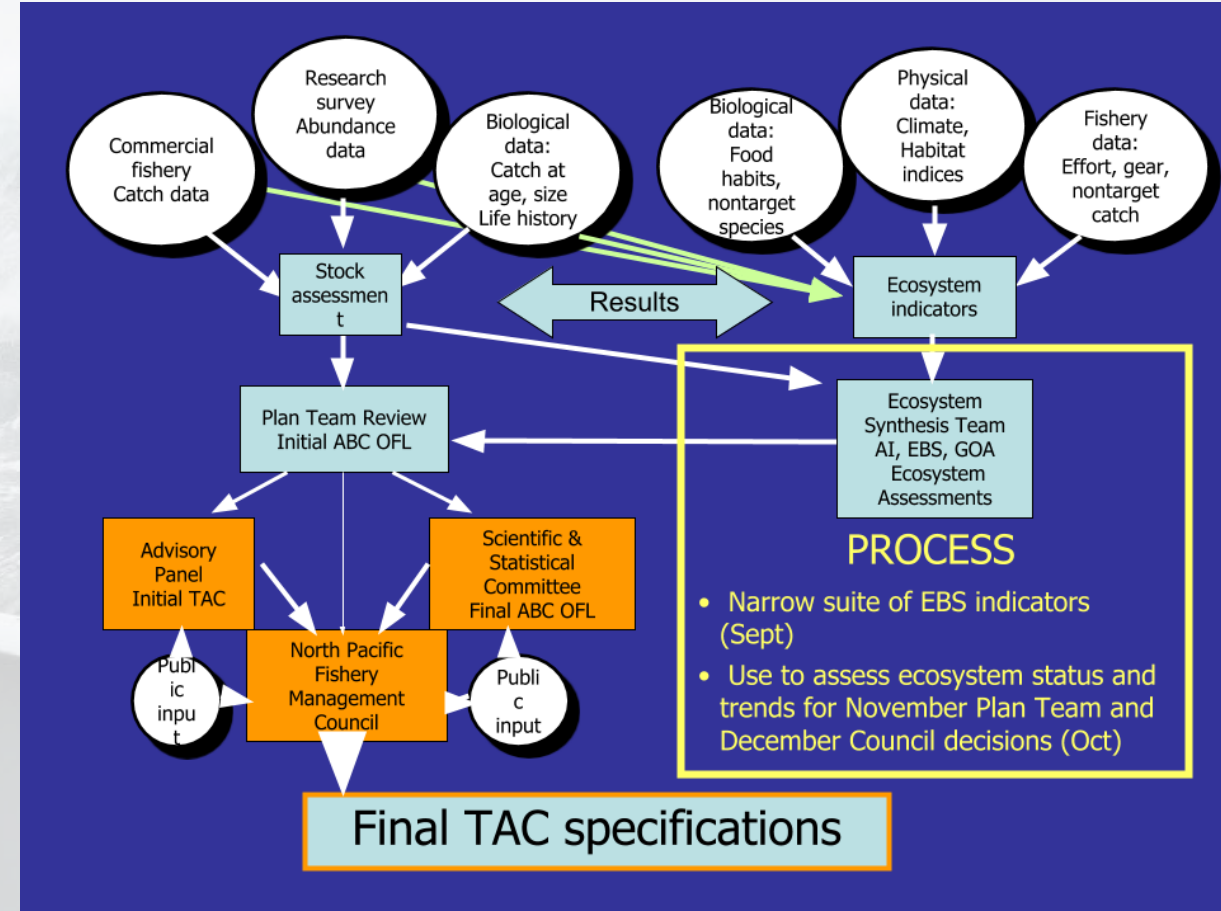
# What is a FEP?



From Lenfest fishery ecosystem task force

# Why did the Council develop a FEP for the Bering Sea?

- NPFMC has a 30+ year history of EBFM implementation and EBFM management measures
  - Ecosystem OY, forage fish ban, Ecosystem Committee, Ecosystem Status Reports, Ecosystem Considerations for individual stocks
- “Organically-developed” best practices and procedures that evolve over time
  - e.g. the request for an October briefing from the ESR team when unusual environmental signals are evident).
- What would an FEP add?





# Why did the Council develop a FEP for the Bering Sea?

Council White Paper (December 2015) based on public scoping:

- Provide added value to **existing Council documents, processes, and decision-making**;
- Deliver targeted, evolving ecosystem evaluations but **does not overwhelm** the audience with a compilation of ecosystem information; and
- Result in **measurable improvements** to Bering Sea fishery management, but does not directly authorize management actions (action-informing rather than action-forcing).

# Why did the Council develop a FEP for the Bering Sea?

- Assess Council management with respect to **ecosystem-based fishery management best practices**, and identify areas of success and gaps indicating areas for improvement on a regular basis
- Identify **connected Bering Sea ecosystem components**, and their importance for specific management questions
- Serve as a **communication tool** for ecosystem science and Council policy
- Create a **transparent public process** for the Council to identify ecosystem values and management responses
- Provide a **framework for strategic planning** that would guide and prioritize research, modeling, and survey needs
- Provide a **framework for considering policy options and associated opportunities, risks, and tradeoffs** affecting FMP species and the broader Bering Sea ecosystem (e.g., evaluation of management tradeoffs among FMPs, fisheries, or with other activities)
- Build **resiliency of Council management strategies**, and options for responding to changing circumstances (e.g., climate change-driven changes to fish distribution and abundance, changes in shipping patterns, etc.)

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# The FEP sets up a *living process*

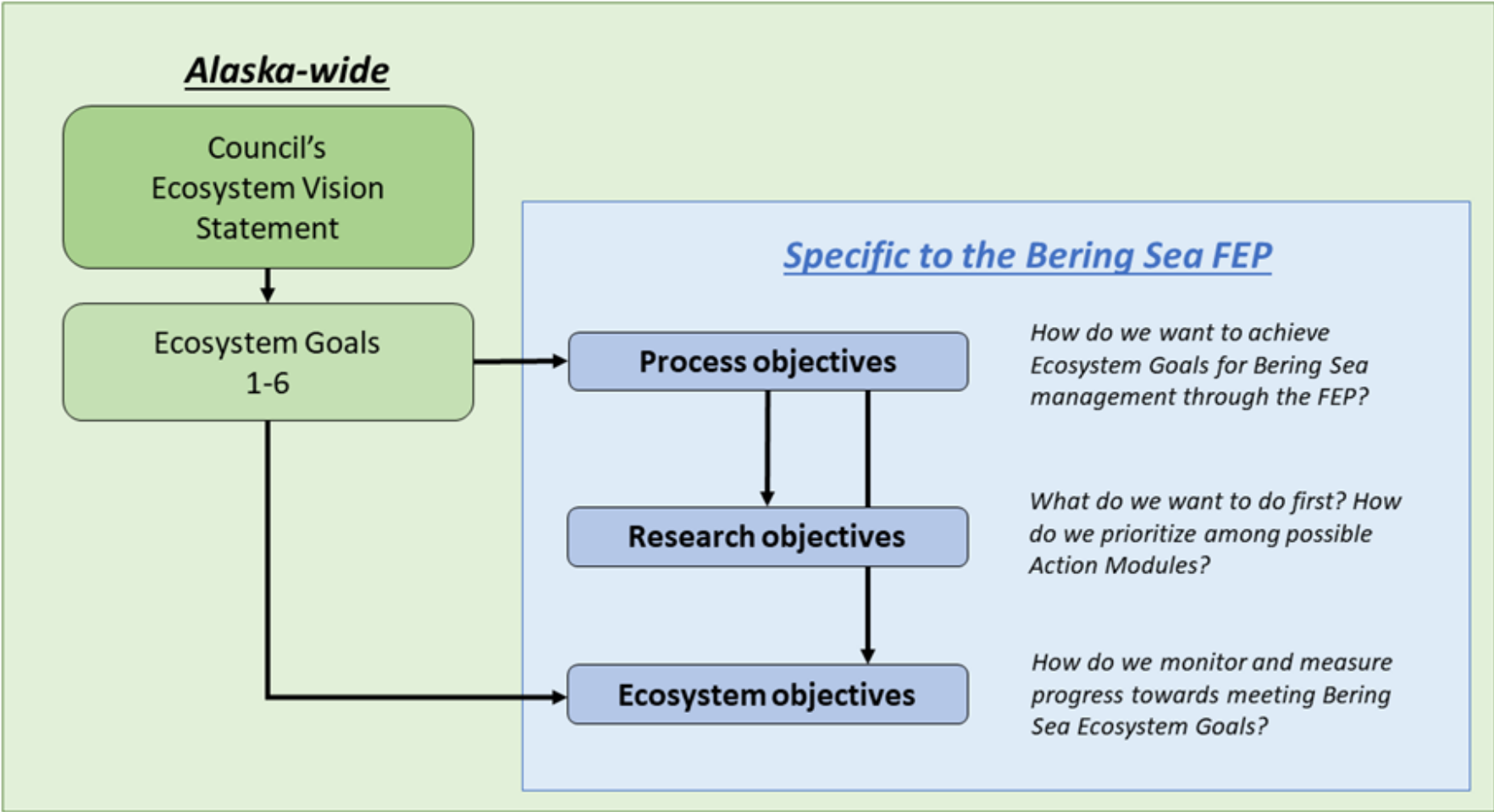
- Aleutians FEP described the ecosystem and associated risks, but did not set up an ongoing process.
- **Primary method:** Standing FEP science review team (provides strategic ecosystem-based science for existing Plan Teams and Council Committees). **NOT a parallel track to existing Plan Teams.**
- Promotes and coordinates **synthesis** of ecosystem information.
- Reviews/recommends **strategic activities** (Ecosystem goals and objectives, indicators, thresholds, “OK-ness”) through **Action Modules**.
- Provides **open and transparent processes** for incorporating ecosystem-based management.
- **Tracks results** through success indicators and metrics.

# FEP explicitly includes the human dimension

- Core FEP aims to define LK and TK clearly, and work towards formalizing their use and review alongside natural and social science

Local Knowledge	Traditional Knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close environmental observations</li><li>• Place-based</li><li>• Empirical</li><li>• Pragmatic</li><li>• Often inter-generational</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A living body of knowledge</li><li>• Acquired through long-term sociocultural, spiritual, and environmental engagement</li><li>• Defines human – animal reciprocal relationships</li><li>• Defines human – human kinship and reciprocity</li><li>• Embodies rules about right conduct that intertwine the pragmatic and spiritual</li><li>• Transmitted inter-generationally through oral history and ritual</li><li>• Rooted in time and place, while having wide applicability</li><li>• Rooted in tradition, while adaptable and dynamic</li></ul>

Goals and objectives





## Ecosystem Goals

1. Maintain, rebuild, and restore fish stocks at levels sufficient to protect, maintain, and restore food web structure and function;
2. Protect, restore, and maintain the ecological processes, trophic levels, diversity, and overall productive capacity of the system;
3. Conserve habitats for fish and other wildlife;
4. Provide for subsistence, commercial, recreational, and non-consumptive uses of the marine environment;
5. Avoid irreversible or long-term adverse effects on fishery resources and the marine environment;
6. Provide a legacy of healthy ecosystems for future generations.

# Three types of objectives

Process objectives

Council actions to improve EBFM in the Bering Sea

p 21

Research objectives

Ideas of how to fulfill the process objectives; link directly to Action Modules

p 21-22

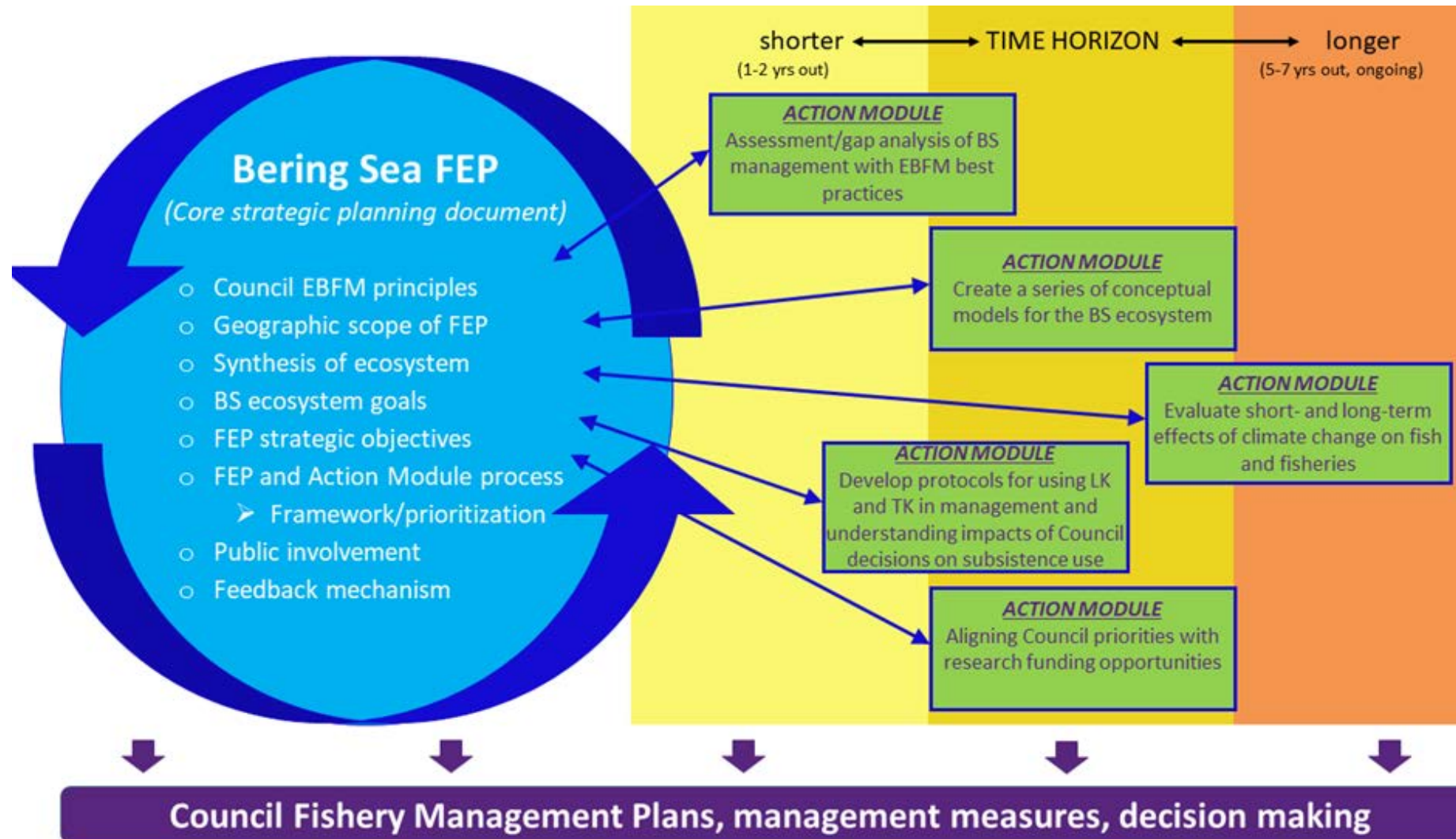
Ecosystem objectives

Bridge between ecosystem goals and ecosystem indicators for monitoring

p 22-23

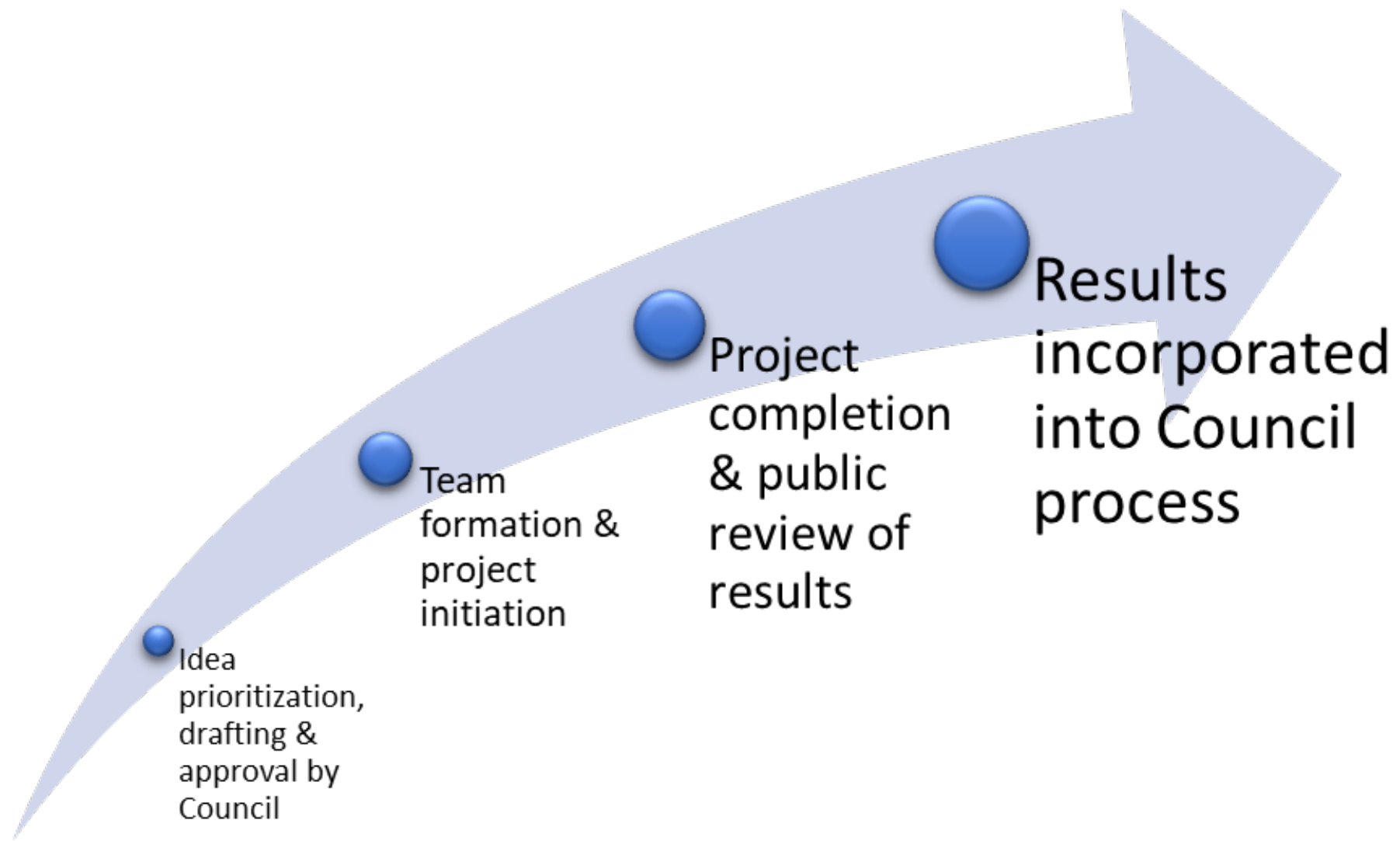


# Structure of the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan *p 25*



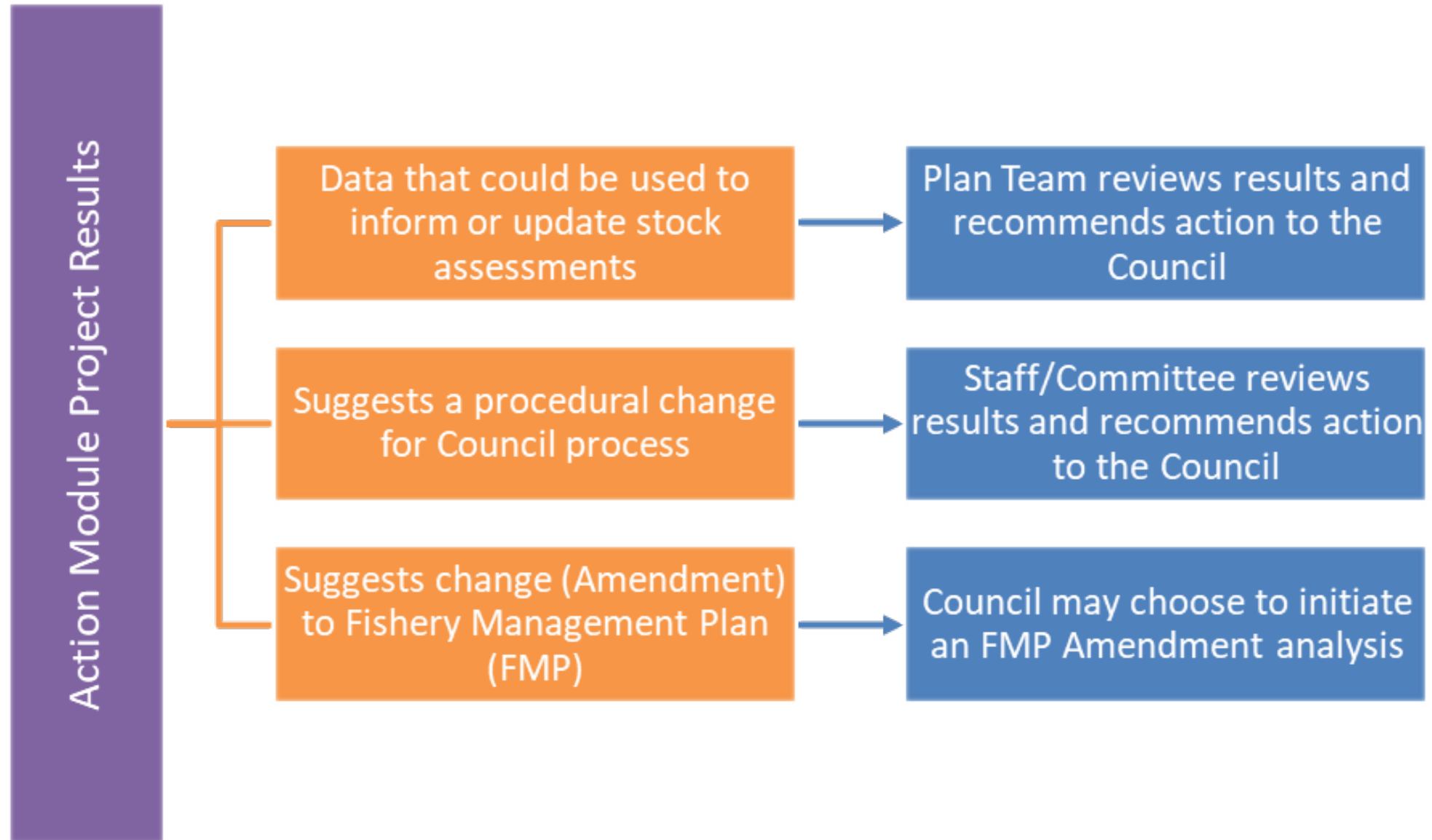
# Core FEP and Action modules *p 25-30*

- Core FEP
  - Contains strategic components of FEP
  - Identifies goals and objectives
  - Describes how FEP works as a framework process
- Action modules
  - Specific analyses or research efforts approved by the Council as valuable
  - Council will initiate individual modules when resources allow
  - Each has its own scope, tasking, timeline
  - Directly linked to FEP objectives
  - Designed so that outcomes will be useful to the Council decision process



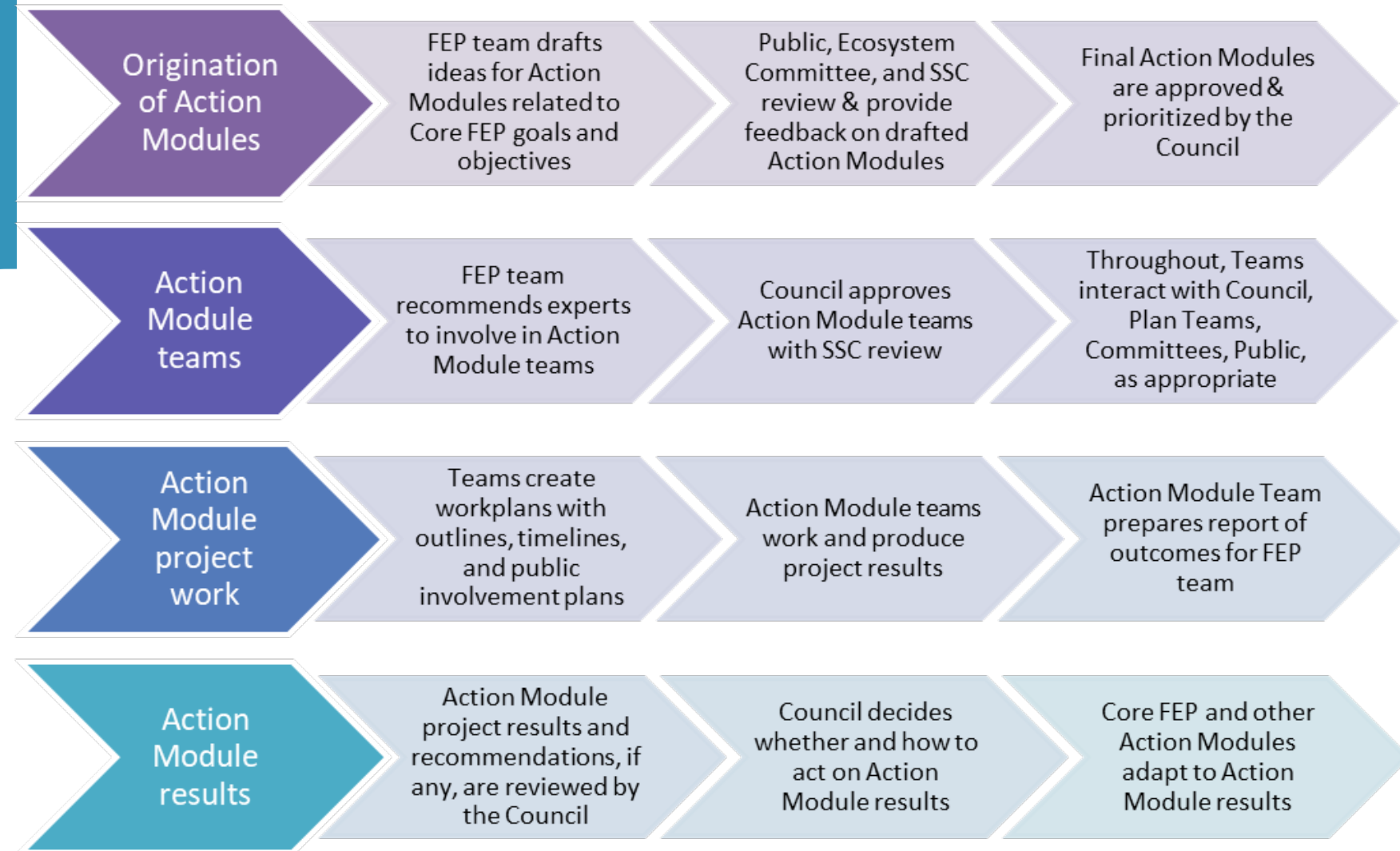
## Life cycle of an action module

# Elements of Action modules, and how used p 27



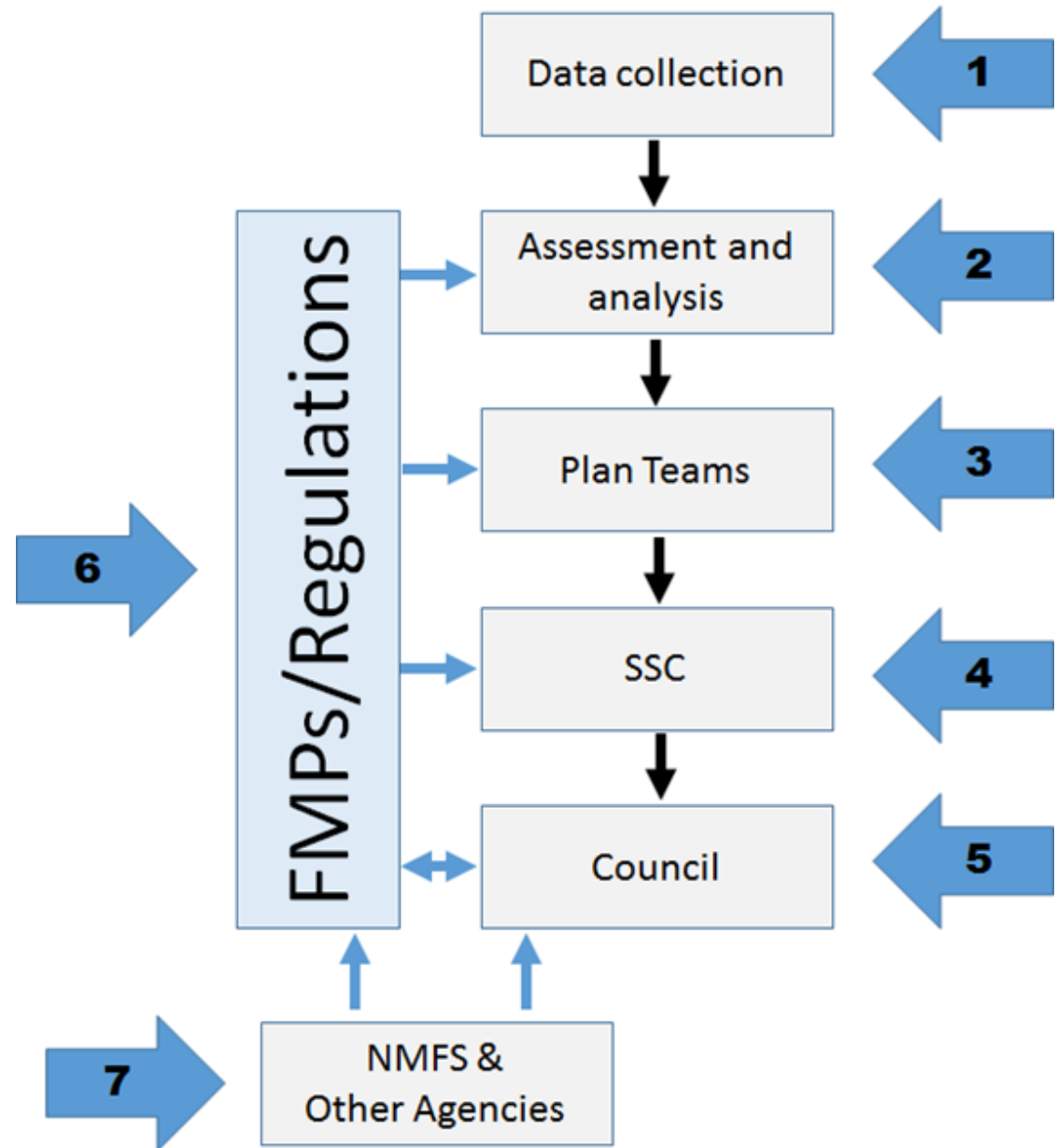
# Action module feedback cycle

p 28



# Potential pathways or onramps for FEP information to enter into Council process

pp 33-35

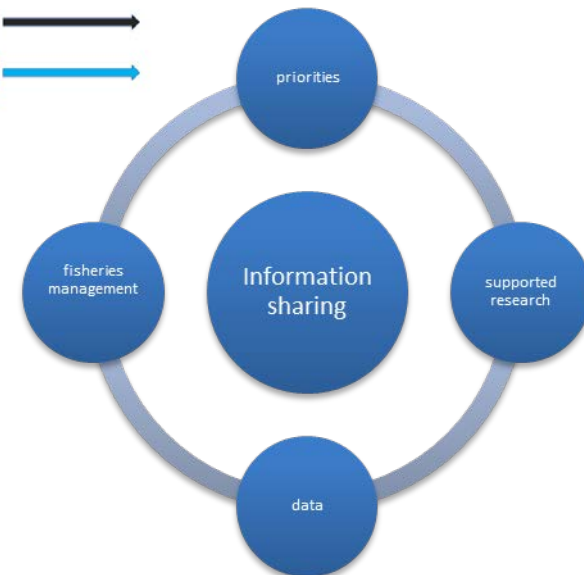
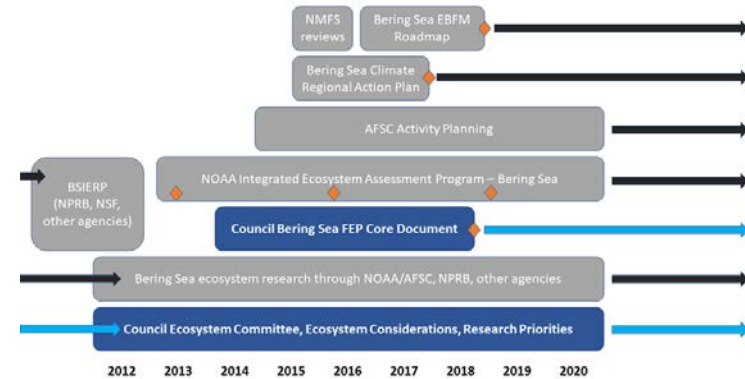


# How will the FEP change the Council process?

- FEP intended to build on and utilize existing Council groups and processes
  - Council, SSC, Ecosystem Committee, Plan Teams (including Social Science Planning Team), Community Engagement Committee
  - Ecosystem Status Report, Research priorities
- Role of Bering Sea FEP team?
  - Review the annual Ecosystem Status Report. Strategic review of ecosystem products, red flags, with respect to ecosystem objectives.
  - Review ongoing Action Module work, consider how modules inform the FEP
  - Input for prioritization of ecosystem research topics
  - Provide the Council with periodic overviews of ecosystem research
  - Track how and what ecosystem products are used in the Council process

# Partnerships with agencies

pp 36-43





# Draft Action Modules in the FEP

*recommended by the  
Ecosystem Committee*

Chapter 4, pp 44-49  
Study plans, Appendix B

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EBFM gap analysis

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Conceptual models

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Climate change

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Traditional Knowledge/Subsistence

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Research

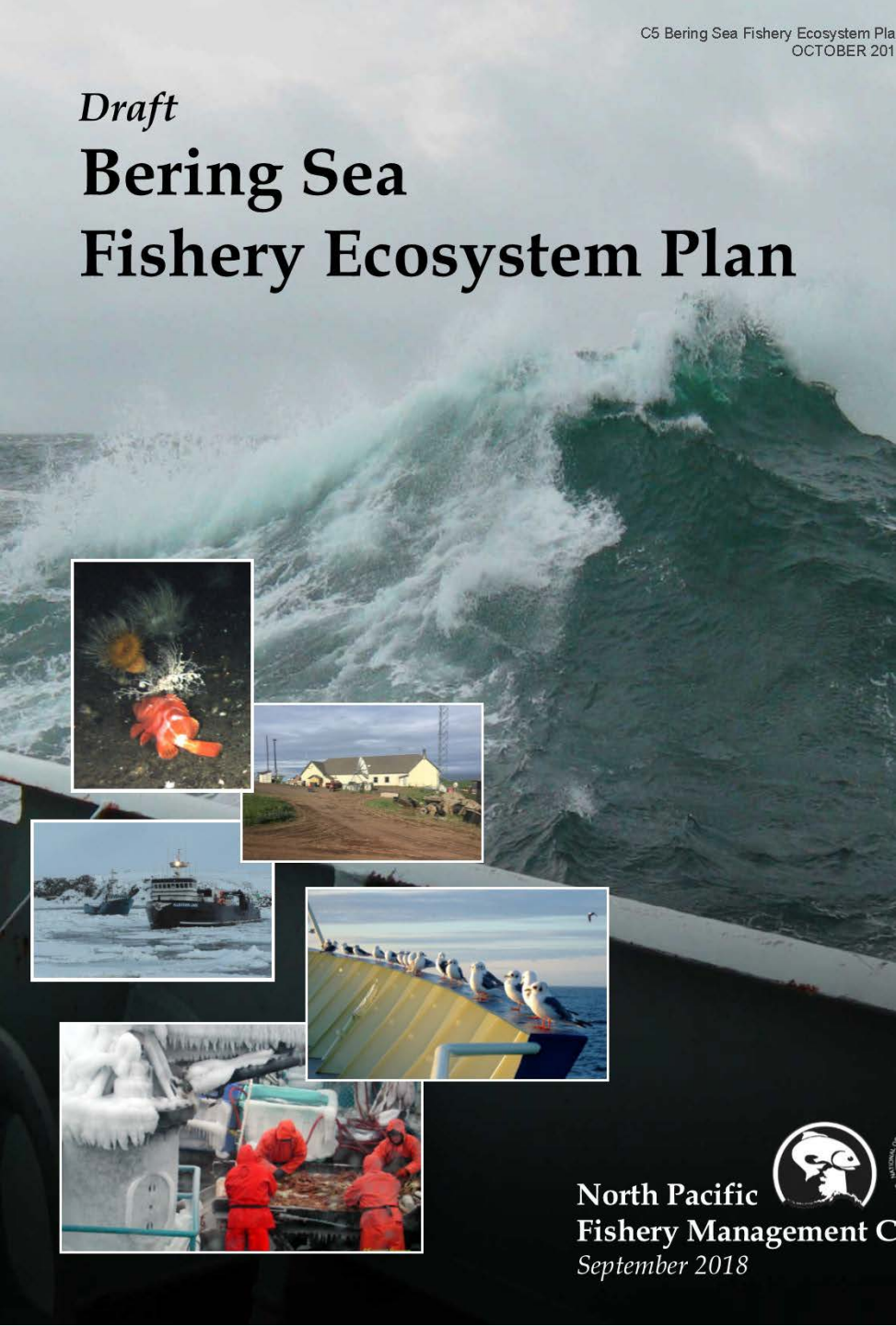
*Draft*  
**Bering Sea  
Fishery Ecosystem Plan**

## Action Module 1.

Assessment/gap analysis of Bering Sea management with EBFM best practices

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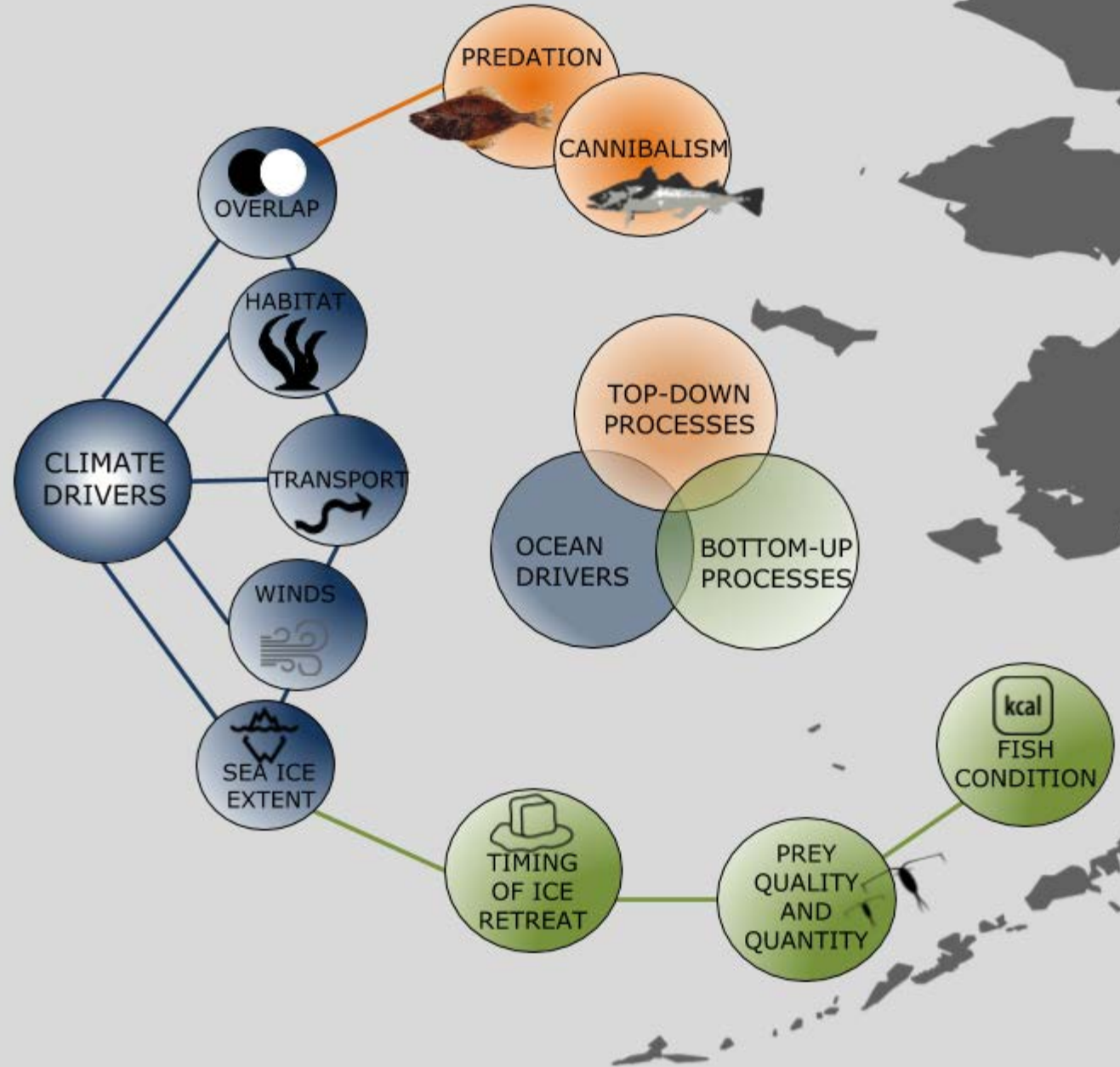
- Evaluate Council management across Council-managed fisheries
  - *In Core FEP*
- Identify areas of success, gaps indicating opportunities for improvement
- Report findings to communicate with a diverse audience of stakeholders



## Action Module 2.

Create a series of conceptual models for the Bering Sea ecosystem

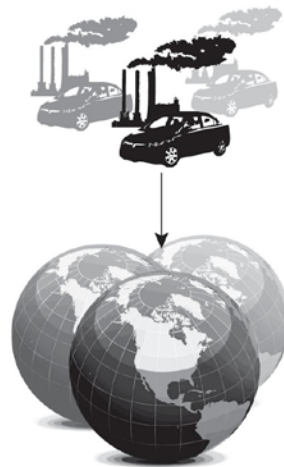
- Models will help the Council in assessing tradeoffs of management actions on different components of the ecosystem, leading to more informed decision making.
- Conceptual models may be integrated in annual SAFE reports, FMP updates, and may inform the setting of TACs.
- Development of models will require an interdisciplinary and interagency team of scientists, and a graphic designer or scientist with exceptional graphic design skills.



### Alaska CLIMate Project

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 Kirstin Holsman (AFSC, REEM/REFM)  
 Alan Haynie (AFSC ESSR/REFM)  
 Stephen Kasperski (AFSC ESSR/REFM)  
 Jim Iannelli (AFSC, SSMA/REFM)  
 Kerim Aydin (AFSC, REEM/REFM)  
 Trond Kristiansen (IMR, Norway)  
 Al Hermann (UW JISAO/PMEL)  
 Wei Cheng (UW JISAO/PMEL)  
 André Punt (UW SAFS)

**FATE: Fisheries & the Environment**  
**SAAM: Stock Assessment Analytical Methods**  
**S&T: Climate Regimes & Ecosystem Productivity**

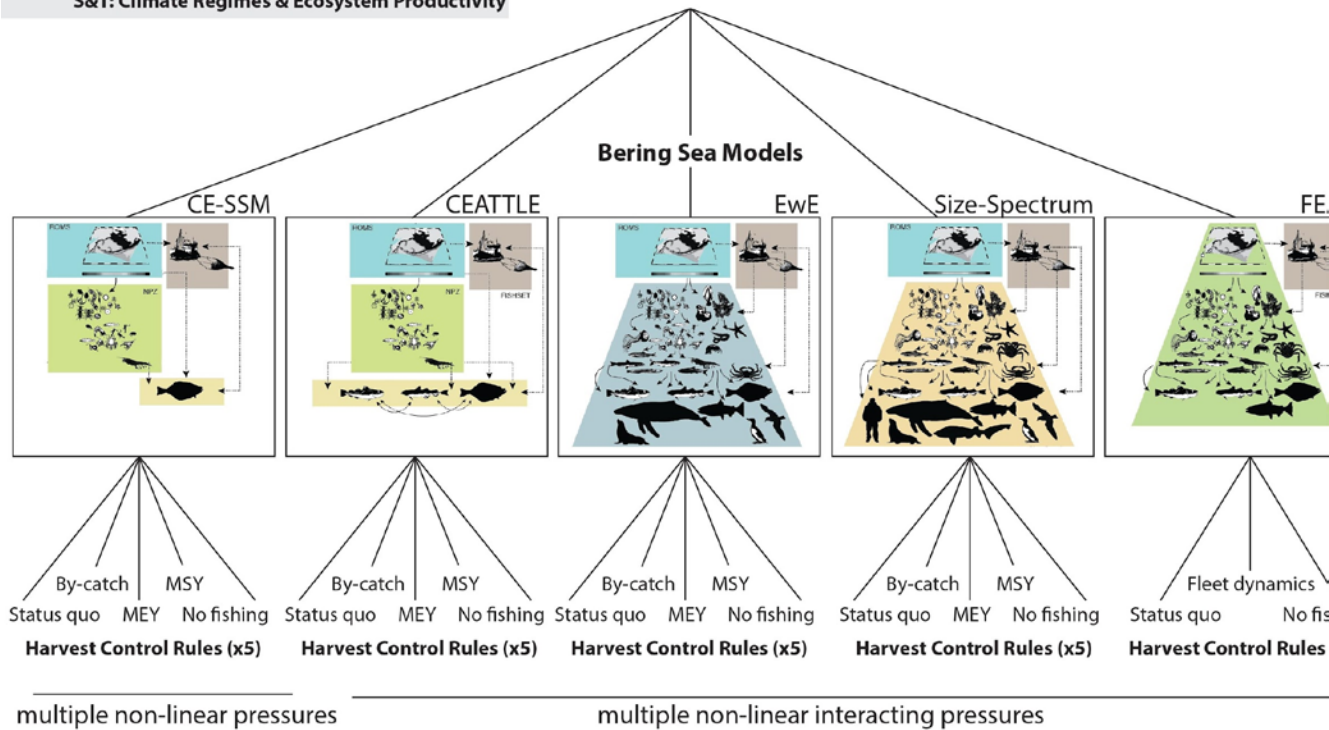


#### IPCC Scenarios (x3)

AR4 A1B  
 AR5 RCP6.0  
 AR5 RCP8.5

#### Global Climate Models (x 11)

ECHO-G (AR4 A1B)  
 MIROC3.2 med res. (AR4 A1B)  
 CGCM3-t47 (AR4 A1B)  
 CCSM4-NCAR- PO (AR5 RCP 6.0 & 8.5)  
 MIROCESM-C- PO (AR5 RCP 6.0 & 8.5)  
 GFDL-ESM2M\*- PO (AR5 RCP 6.0 & 8.5)  
 GFDL-ESM2M\*- PON (AR5 RCP 6.0 & 8.5)



## Action Module 3.

# Evaluate the short- and long-term effects of climate change on fish and fisheries

Evaluate the vulnerability of key species and fisheries to climate change, to strengthen resilience in regional fisheries management.

Methods will leverage projects at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center to:

- coordinate to synthesize results of various ongoing and completed climate change research projects;
- evaluate the scope of impacts on priority species identified in initial studies; and
- strategically reevaluate management strategies every 5-7 years.

Example work under this project includes the Council Ecosystem Workshop in Feb 2018.

# Action Module 3.

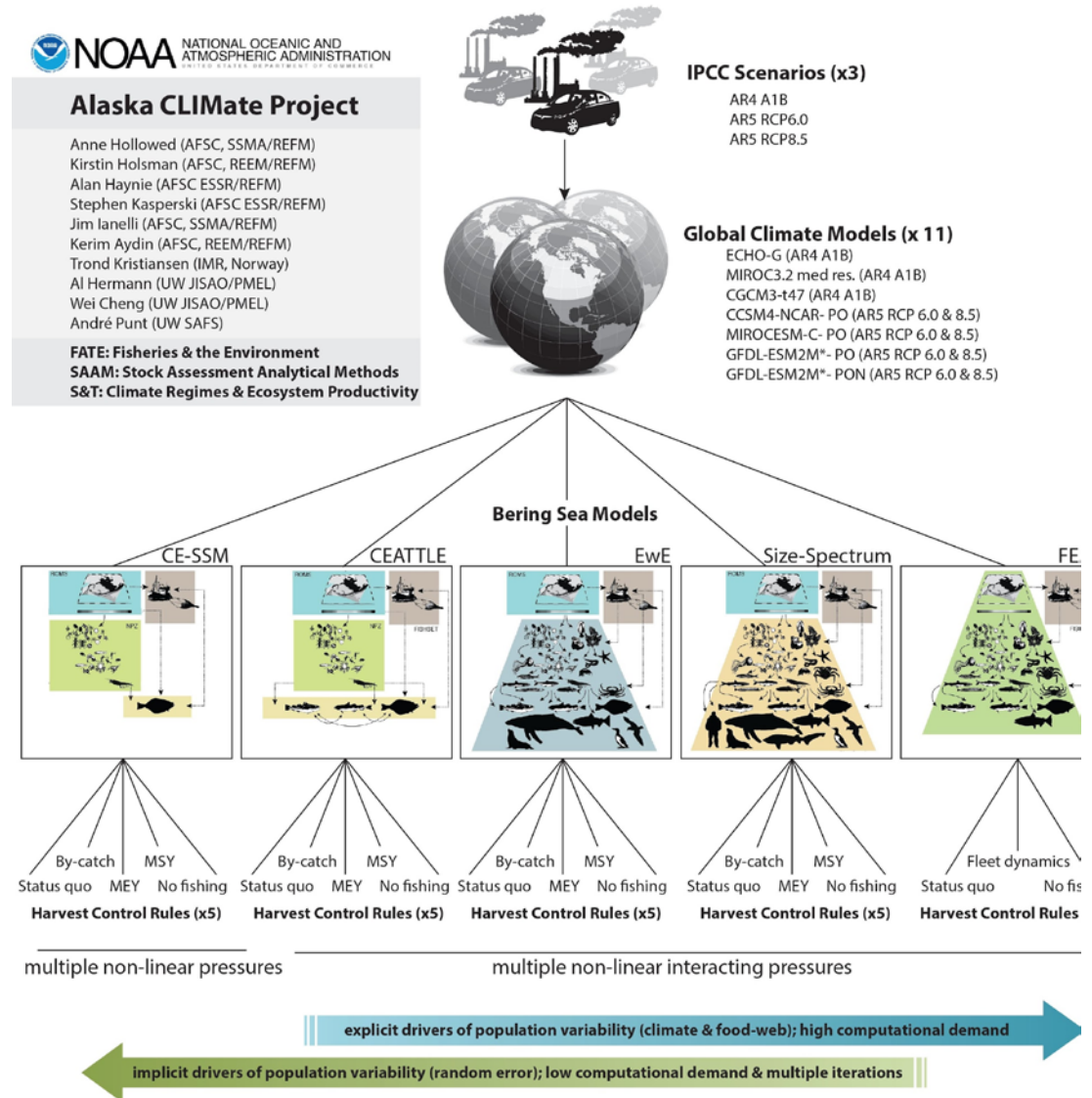
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## Action Module 4.

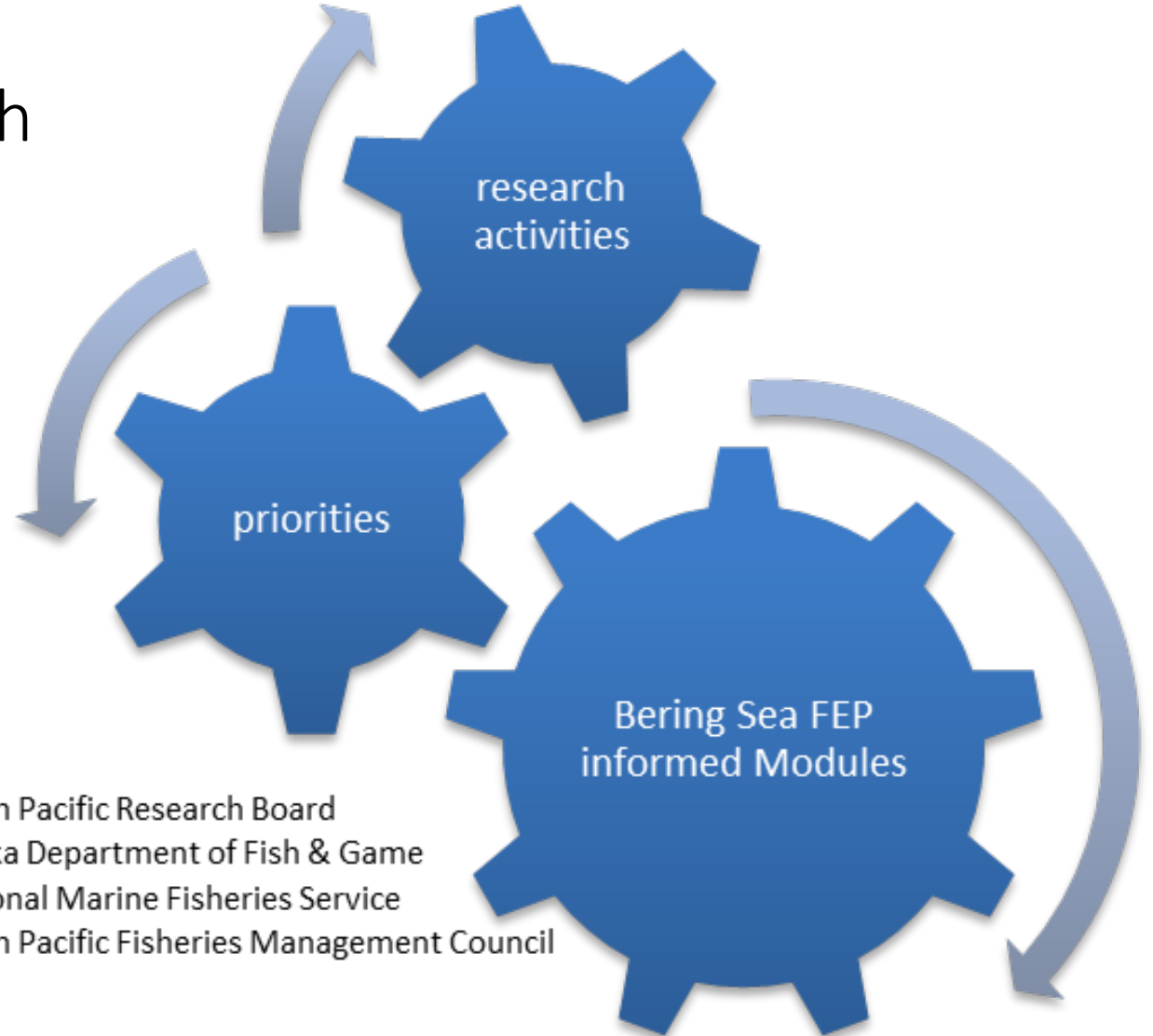
Develop protocols for using Local Knowledge and Traditional Knowledge in management and understanding impacts of Council decisions on subsistence use

- **Part A.** Methods for integrating/incorporating LK and TK into Council processes in the short- to long-term
- **Part B.** Methods for the Council to consider potential impacts to subsistence species, habitats that support those species, and access to subsistence resources

## Action Module 5.

Aligning Council priorities with research funding opportunities

- Track research relevant to FEP Action Modules
- Track how prioritized research projects are used in Council management



# Phases of public involvement for the FEP *p 50-53*

- Initial development of core FEP
  - Scoping meetings, Council testimony, ad hoc engagement opportunities, Council Ecosystem Workshop
  - Additional?
- FEP Action Modules
  - Public involvement plan for each Action Module
  - To include explicit steps for strengthening 2-way communication
  - Project teams will include external expertise as appropriate
- Ongoing Bering Sea FEP EBFM process
  - Evolving discussion, to include two-way communication, periodic reporting from FEP team to Council, development of FEP website
  - Other ideas from public in Appendix C, pp 158-159

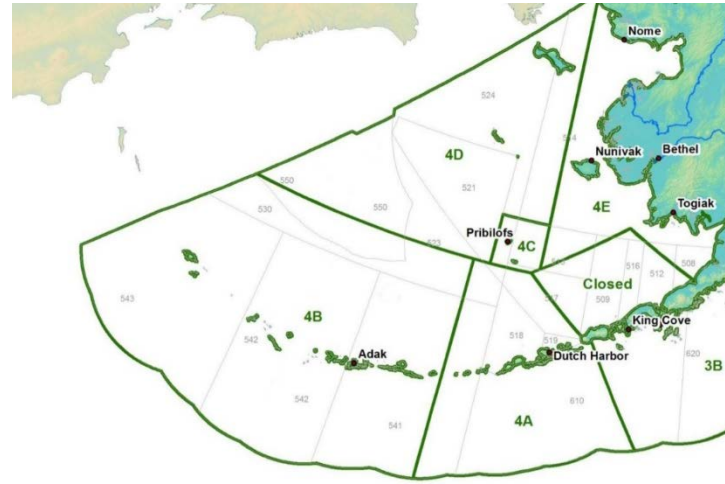
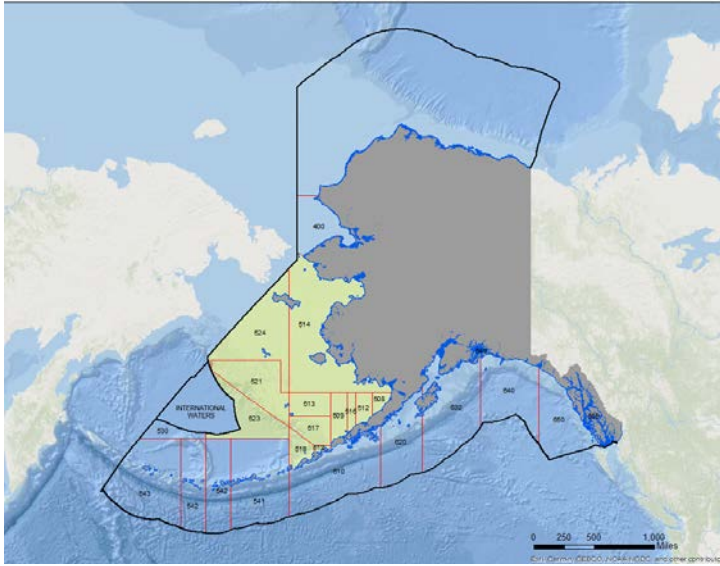


# Other content in the FEP

Synthesis of the  
Bering Sea  
ecosystem  
(Chapter 6)

Assessment of  
Council's current  
EBFM practice  
(Chapter 7)

- Chapter 8 – placeholder for risk analysis (future action module?)
- Chapter 9 – References and information resources

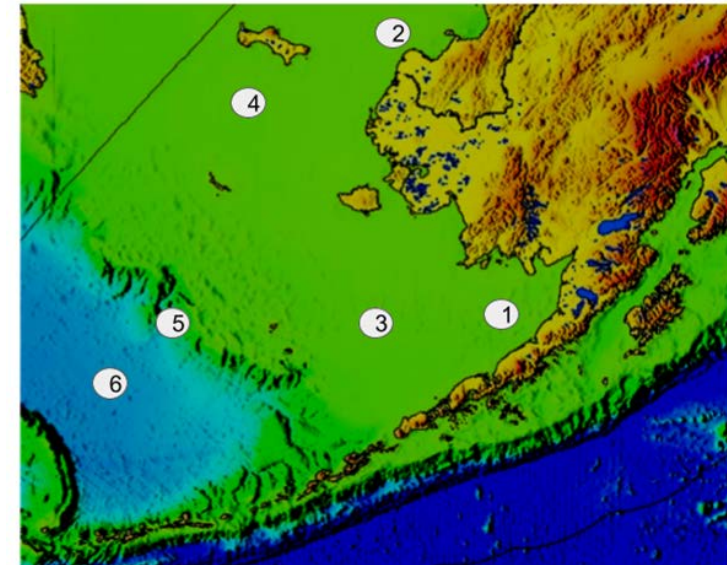
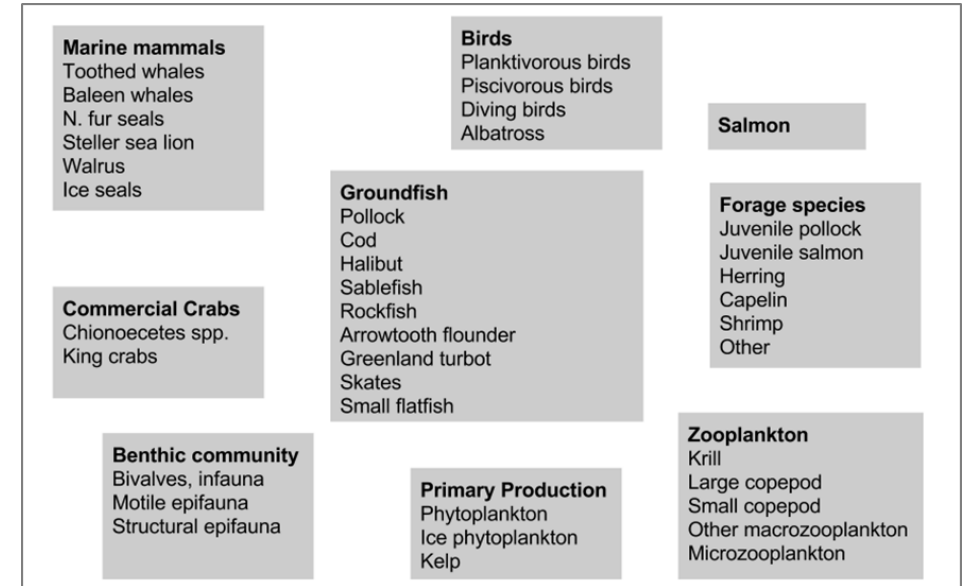


Resource, Population	Agency	Responsibility
groundfish	NPFMC/NMFS	3-200nm; population abundance; setting harvest levels, fishery management, monitoring, and enforcement
halibut	ADF&G	0-3nm
halibut	IPHC	population abundance, setting harvest levels
halibut	NPMFC/NMFS	management of fishery
crab	NPFMC/NMFS	monitor overfishing levels, allocations
crab	ADF&G	harvest levels; fishery management, monitoring, enforcement
scallop	NPMFC/NMFS	monitor overfishing levels
scallop	ADF&G	harvest levels, fishery management, monitoring, enforcement
salmon	ADF&G	population abundance, harvest levels, fishery management
salmon	NPFMC/NMFS	retention prohibited 3-200nm
herring	ADF&G	population abundance, harvest levels, fishery management
other fish	NMFS	advisory authority for habitat for all fish incl nearshore watersheds
marine mammals (except walrus and others)	NMFS	population abundance, advisory authority, protection under MMPA and ESA
walrus and others	USFWS	population abundance, advisory authority, protection under MMPA and ESA
birds	USFWS	population abundance, advisory authority, protection under MBTA
citizens of each coastal community	Municipal entity [update]	municipal responsibility
Land [update]	USFWS	protection of Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, including marine responsibility extending offshore
shipping	BLM, DNR	own some small parcels
shipping	DEC	oversight of spill response
shipping	USCG	ensure safety of vessels in US ports and waterways
oil and gas development	BOEM	3-200nm
oil and gas development	DNR or DEC	0-3nm
military activity	Alaskan Command, Pacific Command	add
formerly used defense sites	AFCEE	cleanup

# FEP Boundary and Jurisdictions

# Ecological and Oceanographic Characteristics

pp 60-63

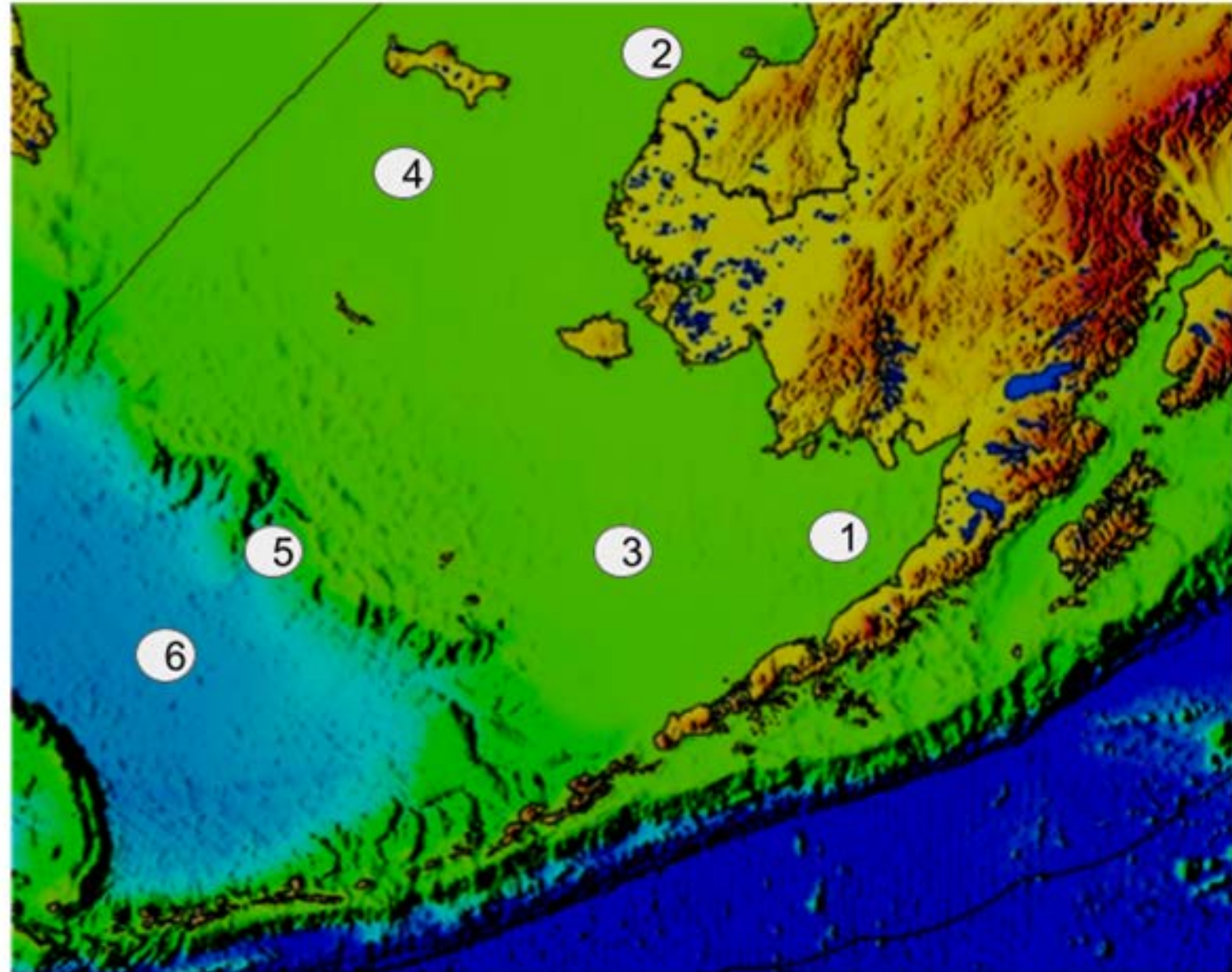


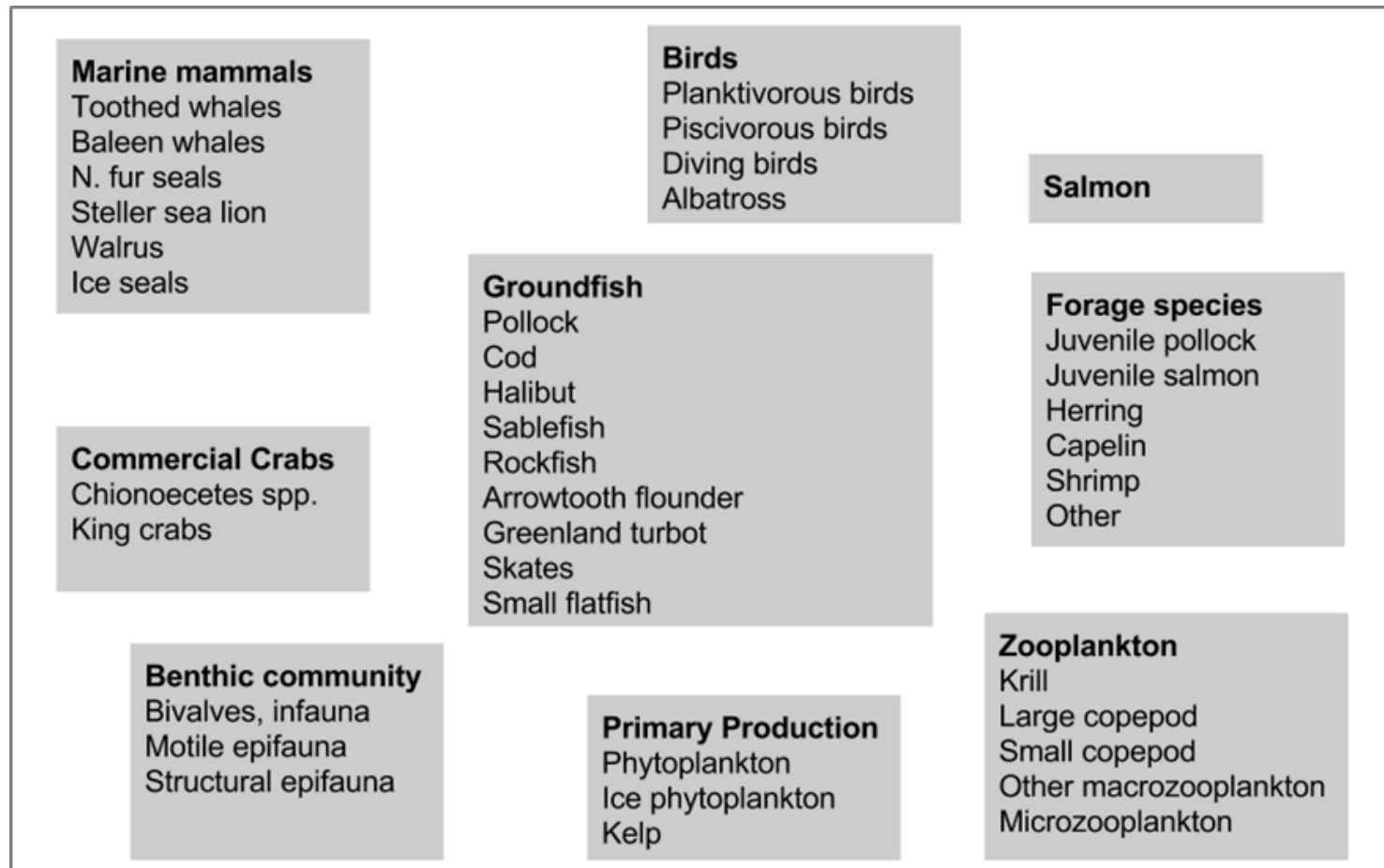
# Define broad zones based on geography and climatology

Arctic versus subarctic weather patterns

Ice cover

Depth



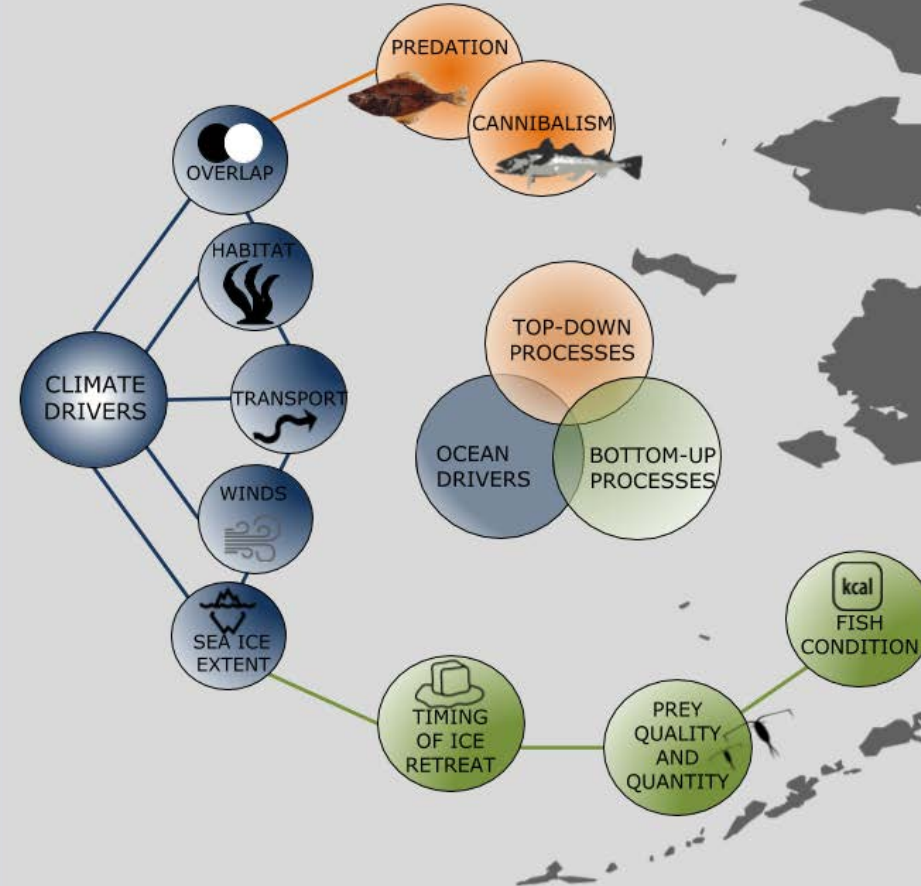


Define broad species groupings based on ecological and management roles

# Action Module (~1 year)

Develop Conceptual models for functional groups, zones, key species, linking drivers and pressures

Juvenile pollock example – Action module



Oceanographic & Recruitment Processes

- Will promote:
  - Directional (“good/bad”) status indicators tuned to ecosystem components via conceptual models, and indicator thresholds.
  - Gap analysis and research prioritization.

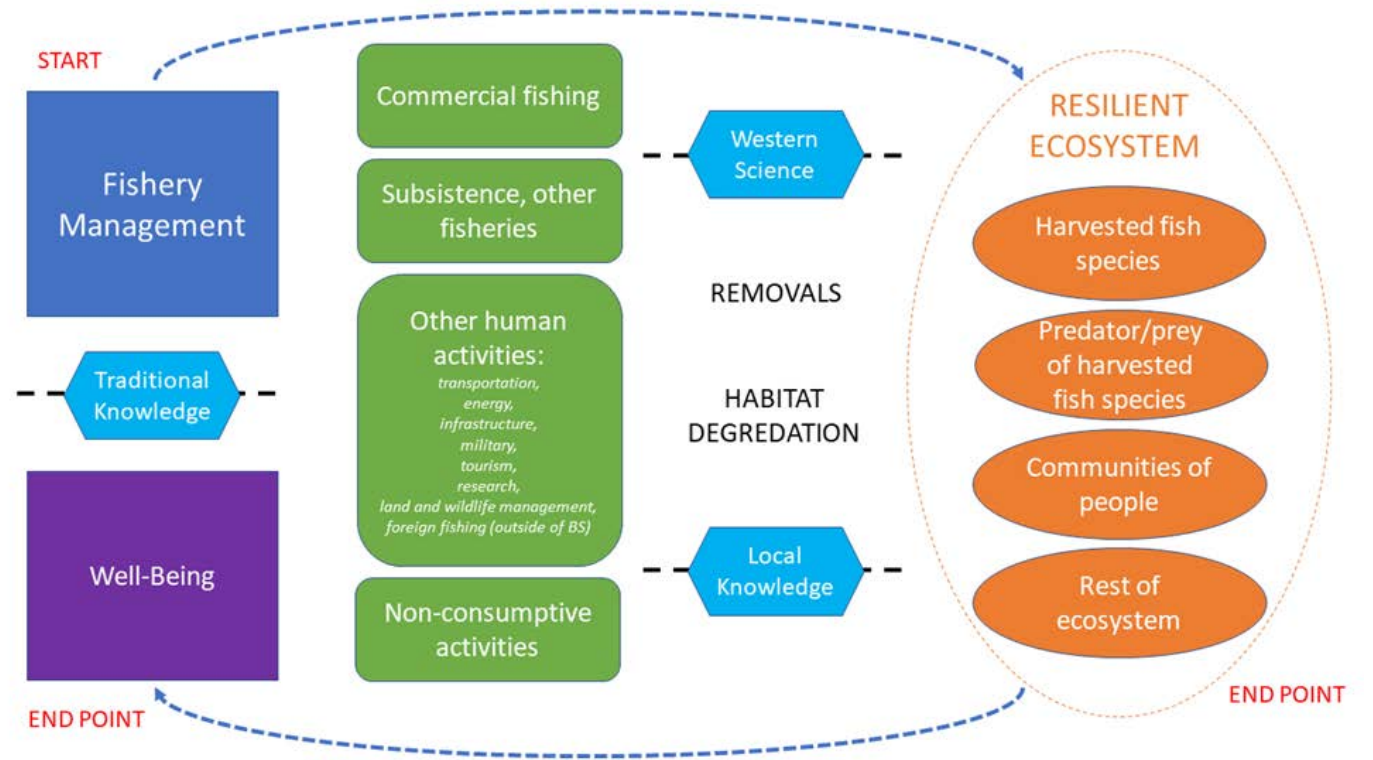
# Action Module (~1 year)

Develop Conceptual  
models for each zone,  
grouping, linking  
drivers and pressures

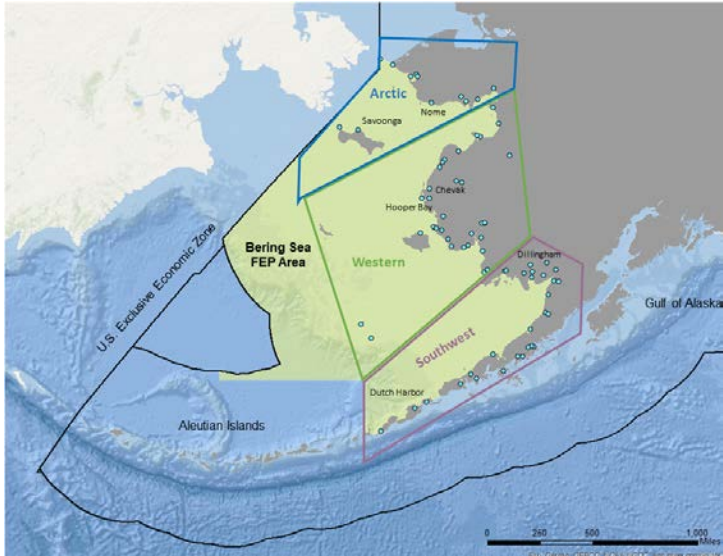
- Originally planned as part of core FEP.
- Initial feedback was for greater stakeholder input, with special emphasis of including LTK as “core knowledge” rather than “add-on” – currently scoping methods.
- Additional feedback was for “user-friendly” (diagrammatic, graphical) and “living”.
- Greater scope is part of Action Module.

# Human Networks

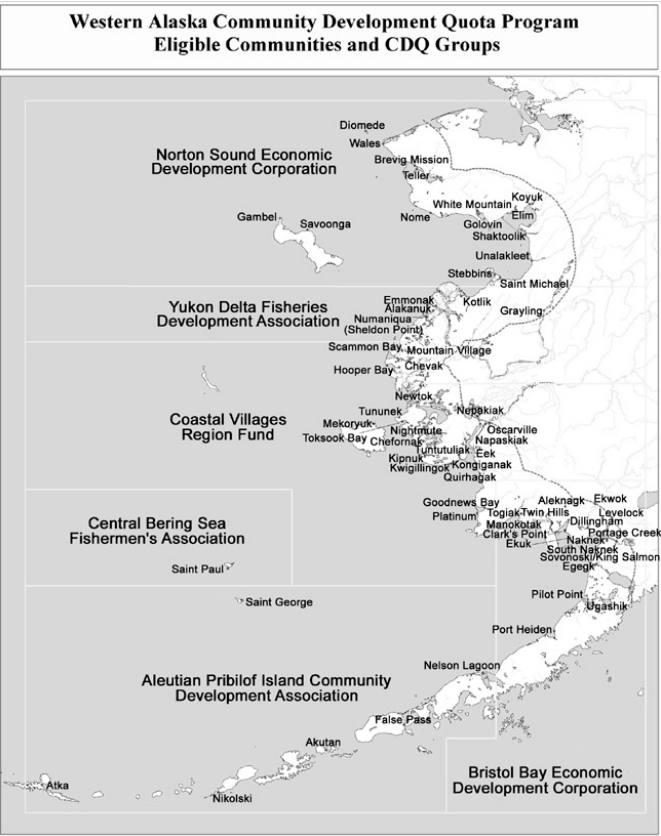
pp 64-85





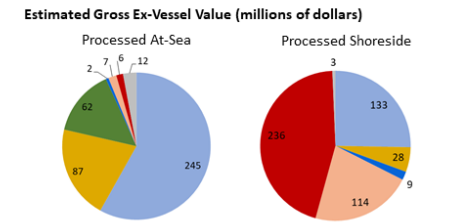
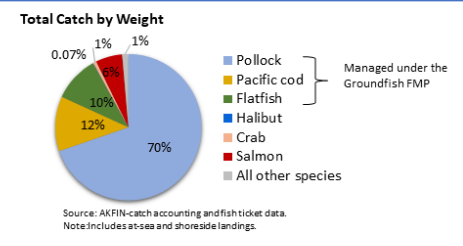
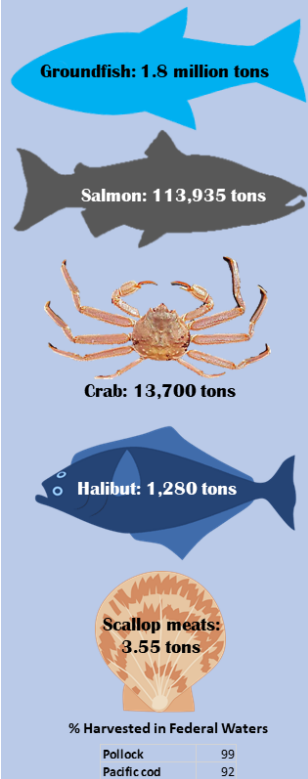


Arctic	Western	Southwest
Brevig Mission	Alakanuk	Akutan
Diomede/Inalik	Chefornak	Aleknagik
Elim	Chevak	Chignik
Gambell	Eek	Chignik Lagoon
Golovin	Emmonak	Chignik Lake
Koyuk	Goodnews Bay	Clark's Point
Nome	Grayling	Cold Bay
Port Clarence	Hooper Bay	Dillingham
Savoonga	Kipnuk	Egegik
Teller	Kongiganak	Ekwok
Wales	Kotlik	False pass
White Mountain	Kwigillingok	Ivanof Bay
	Mekoryuk	King cove
	Mountain Village	King Salmon/Savohoski
	Napakiak	Levelock
	Napaskiak	
	Newtok/Metarvik	
		Manokotak
		Naknek
		Nelson Lagoon
		Nikolski
		Perryville
		Pilot Point
		Port Heiden/Meschick
		Portage Creek
		Sand point
		South Naknek
		Togiak
		Twin Hills
		Ugashik
		Unalaska/Dutch



# Communities

## Caught and Processed in the Bering Sea 2017



**% Harvested in Federal Waters**

Pollock	99
Pacific cod	92

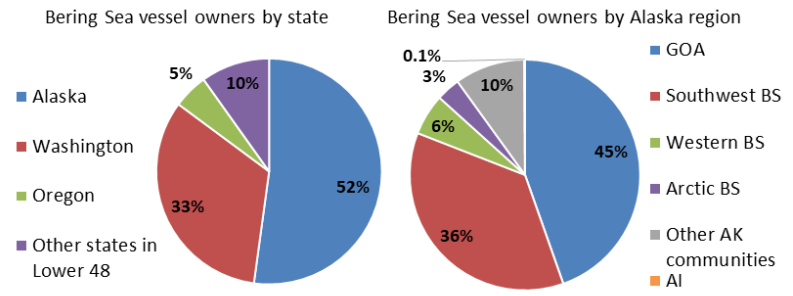
## Alaska's seafood exports in 2011:



Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

## Vessels and Processors in Commercial Bering Sea Fisheries

Over 2,000 vessels participated in Bering Sea fisheries in 2017\*

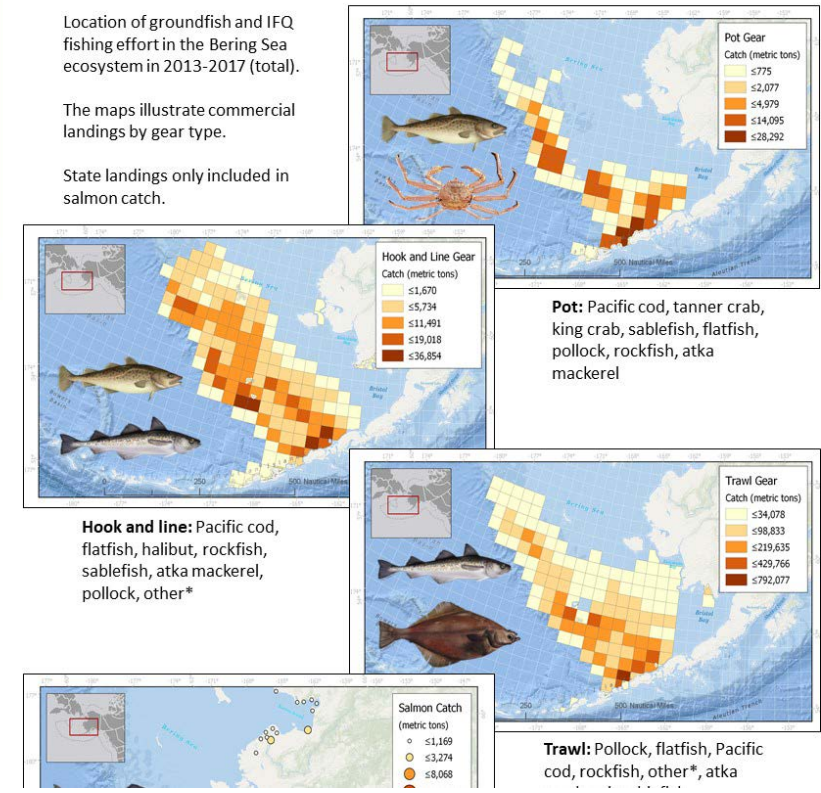


## Commercial Fishing in the Bering Sea by Gear Type, 2013-2017

Location of groundfish and IFQ fishing effort in the Bering Sea ecosystem in 2013-2017 (total).

The maps illustrate commercial landings by gear type.

State landings only included in salmon catch.



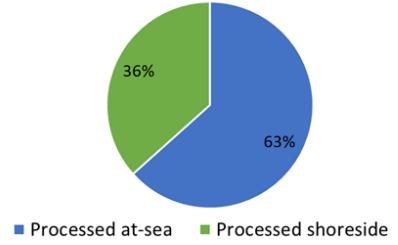
**Pot:** Pacific cod, tanner crab, king crab, sablefish, flatfish, pollock, rockfish, atka mackerel

**Hook and line:** Pacific cod, flatfish, halibut, rockfish, sablefish, atka mackerel, pollock, other\*

**Trawl:** Pollock, flatfish, Pacific cod, rockfish, other\*, atka

## Vessels and Processors in Commercial Bering Sea Fisheries

By value, at-sea processors processed 63% of all BS seafood in 2017



This includes:

- 94% of BS flatfish
- 92% of BS rockfish
- 81% of BS Pacific cod
- 60% of BS pollock

# Commercial fisheries

Pages 66-73

# Sustaining Subsistence, Life & Culture as the Climate Changes

Climate change is here today and accelerating, transforming the land, waters, plants and animals of western arctic Alaska. Communities, tribal organizations, land managers, researchers and agencies will need to work together to respond to these serious challenges and where possible, explore new opportunities.

**More Than Just Food: Family, Fitness, Identity, Community, Memory, Spirit**  
 Subsistence is the heart of life of western arctic Alaska. The Inupiat believe, based on a Lakota Native Knowledge Network graphic poem, a proverbial act of love of rocks, food, dignity, the seasons, and how these seasons are changing. "For us, it's like someone moved the calendar by a month and nobody told us. We wonder what it must be like for the animals, plants and fish."

**What's a Walrus Worth?**  
 About 500 pounds of walrus oil, high quality meat.  
 Provides 80% of the protein in the diet of the Inupiat.  
 Estimated replacement cost: \$6,000 - \$7,500

**PROVIDING FOOD**

- "The fishery is a valuable asset of Inupiat living, food, and culture. We are losing it." - Inupiat
- "I should see more regulations, help to protect natural resources." - Inupiat
- "Overharvesting and poaching may be one adaptation strategy but they don't work in the long run. Inupiat have to be able to sustain themselves. It should be a priority for the government to take care of the fishery." - Inupiat
- "They are more old-fashioned hunters, but they are not as good as the younger ones." - Inupiat
- "New subsistence regulations, and more regulations." - Inupiat
- "The fishery is a very important part of our lives. You can't just take it away from us. And people who are harvesting the fish are not getting the credit they deserve. We need to support the subsistence industry and the people who are harvesting the fish." - Inupiat
- "We need more information to protect our subsistence along the coast." - Inupiat

**WORKING TOGETHER TO TRACK CHANGE**

- "New subsistence regulations, and more regulations." - Inupiat
- "New regulations to protect the subsistence industry and the people who are harvesting the fish." - Inupiat
- "We need to support the subsistence industry and the people who are harvesting the fish." - Inupiat
- "We need to support the subsistence industry and the people who are harvesting the fish." - Inupiat

**LIVING WITH RISING WATERS**

- "There is a lot more rain in the mountains. The water is coming down the mountains and it's coming down the mountains." - Inupiat
- "We are going to have to move back. The land is getting wetter and wetter." - Inupiat
- "We need to support the subsistence industry and the people who are harvesting the fish." - Inupiat
- "We need to support the subsistence industry and the people who are harvesting the fish." - Inupiat

**Response to Change:**  
 "We have always been adaptive, resilient people" for thousands of years, Alaska's traditional cultures have shown remarkable resilience, adapting a mix of ancient and modern practices to survive and thrive. "Some of the things that we have done are..."

## The Ocean is Our Grocery Store & It's Changing in Ways We've Never Seen

The Bering Sea Bering Sea and Chukchi Sea form one of the richest food sources and biologically productive ocean systems on the planet. The same unique characteristics that support this area's productivity are likely to be altered in ways that make them less resilient to the impacts of climate change.

### How is Climate Changing Impacting Marine Ecosystems? And How Might We Respond? Three Examples:

**NEW PATHS FOR WHALES & MARINE SHIPPING?**  
 Climate change is altering what migration routes and feeding patterns whales have used for centuries. Changing the ocean's temperature and ice cover may alter the location and timing of their feeding grounds. This could impact the health of the whales and the communities that rely on them for subsistence. Response strategies include monitoring whale movements, adjusting shipping routes, and providing more information to the public.

**WALRUS, EIDER, & MELTING SEAS?**  
 Climate change is altering what migration routes and feeding patterns whales have used for centuries. Changing the ocean's temperature and ice cover may alter the location and timing of their feeding grounds. This could impact the health of the whales and the communities that rely on them for subsistence. Response strategies include monitoring whale movements, adjusting shipping routes, and providing more information to the public.

**SALMON, COD, POLLOCK IN A CHANGING OCEAN?**  
 Climate change is altering what migration routes and feeding patterns whales have used for centuries. Changing the ocean's temperature and ice cover may alter the location and timing of their feeding grounds. This could impact the health of the whales and the communities that rely on them for subsistence. Response strategies include monitoring whale movements, adjusting shipping routes, and providing more information to the public.

**Complex Ecosystem Building Blocks are Vulnerable to Climate Change**

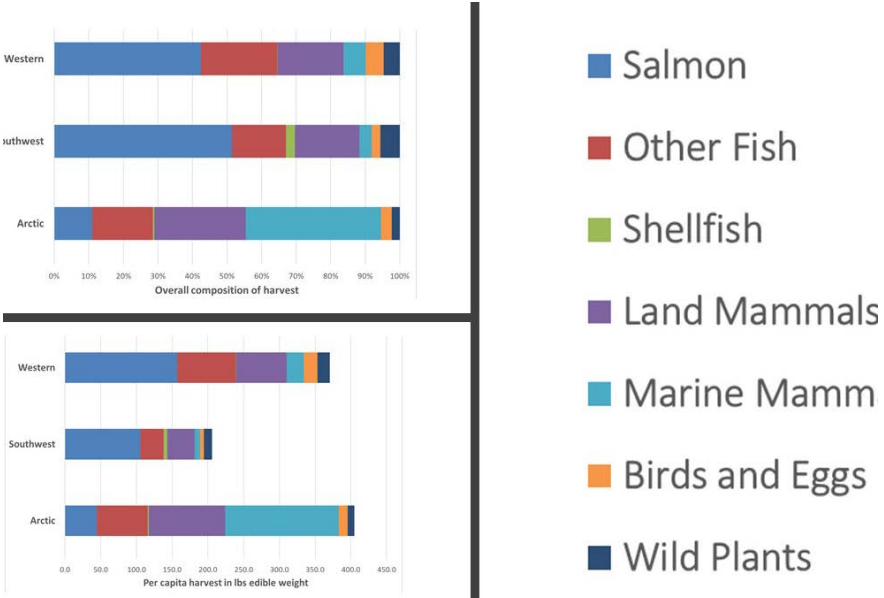
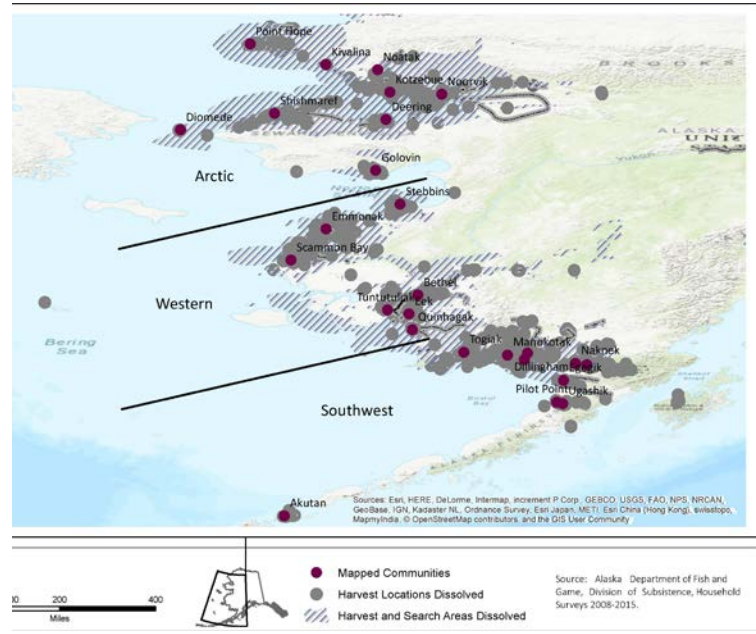
The abundant life in the Bering Sea region emerges from a complex web of physical, chemical, and biological building blocks. Climate change is altering the structure of this system. This in turn could dramatically change what the ecosystem provides, including subsistence food on the table and the basis for the region's robust commercial fishing industry.

**Ecological Foundations:** The system is shaped by currents, chemistry, temperature, and the abundance & distribution of nutrients.

**Primary & Secondary Production:** The system is shaped by currents, chemistry, temperature, and the abundance & distribution of nutrients.

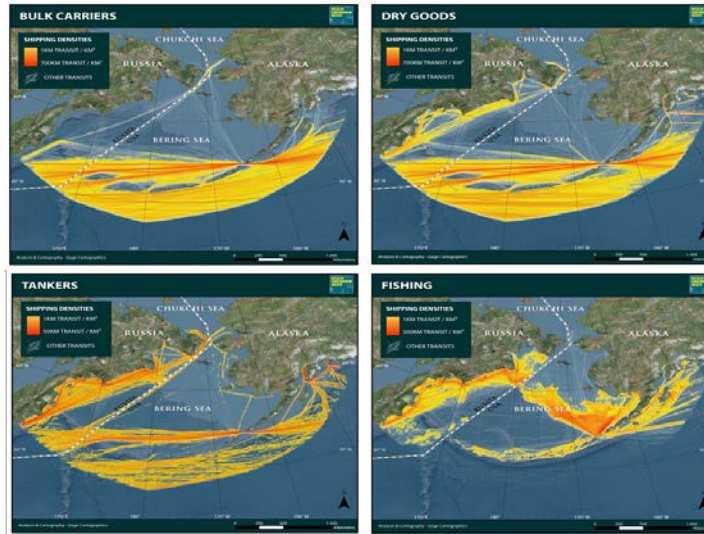
**Wildlife:** The system is shaped by currents, chemistry, temperature, and the abundance & distribution of nutrients.

**Human Impacts:** The system is shaped by currents, chemistry, temperature, and the abundance & distribution of nutrients.



# Subsistence

pp 74-79

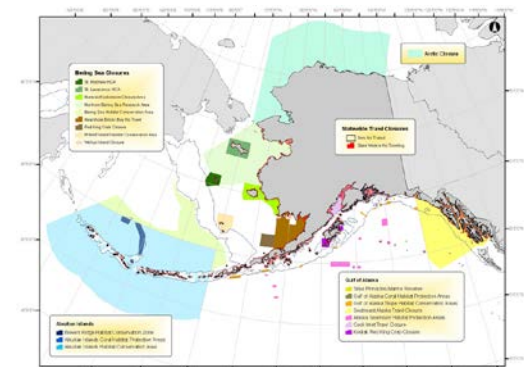
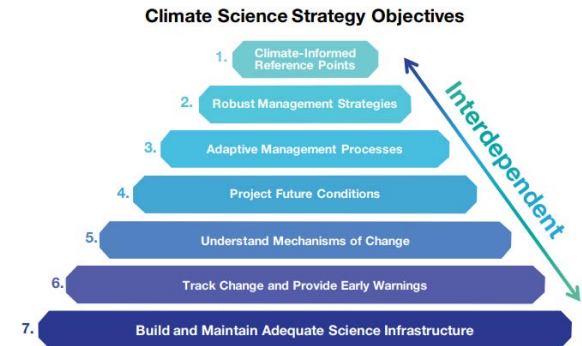
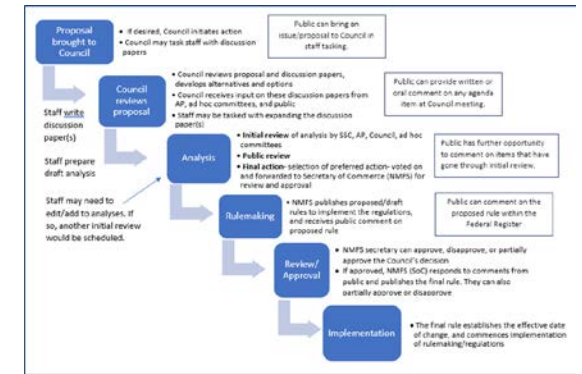


# Non-fishing activities

- pp 82-86

# Assessment of Council's current EBFM

- Chapter 7, pp 88-112
- Evaluates Council's:
  - Management policies and process
  - Species conservation measures
  - Measures to reduce bycatch, habitat/ marine mammal/ seabird interaction from fishing
  - Measures and processes to preserve viable communities, stakeholder participation
  - Considerations for monitoring and adaptive planning for changing conditions



# What is the Council's action here today, and at final action?

## Initial Review

- Review draft FEP
  - Request changes from FEP team
  - Receive feedback from public

## Final Action

- Adopt FEP
- Adopt list of action modules
- Initiate action on some modules

