

C-5 Sculpin/Squid Ecosystem Component
Council Motion
January 30, 2020

The Council releases the analysis for public review, with changes as recommended by the SSC as practicable, and changes to the purpose and need statement identified below. The Council continues to recommend Alternative 2 as its preliminary preferred alternative, which is to maintain the designation of squid and sculpins in both the BSAI and GOA FMPs as a non-target 'Ecosystem Component Species', maintain the current maximum retainable amount, and allow for limited use and sale of incidentally caught squid and sculpins consistent with past practice.

Purpose and Need

Squid is defined in the ecosystem component (EC) category **in the FMPs for groundfish in the BSAI and GOA**. The Council, **in October 2019**, took action to recommend that sculpins be defined in EC category **in the BSAI and GOA** as well. There are no directed fisheries for squid or sculpins in either the BSAI or GOA. Incidental catch of squid is retained in some fisheries and often utilized to prevent waste. Typically, sculpins are not retained but can be in some circumstances.

The Council's June 2017 action to reclassify the squid complex into the EC category in the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMPs was based on the best available scientific information and was consistent with the revised National Standard 1 guidelines. However, the Federal rulemaking to implement the Council's action **incorrectly** prohibited the use or sale of incidentally caught squid unless processed into fish meal. The June 2017 Council action and supporting analyses indicated: 1) retention of squids would continue at or slightly above current levels, and 2) past production types would continue to be allowed including whole bait and whole fish/food fish. The purpose of this action is to align regulations with the long-standing use of squid, the permissible use of squid based on the Council's June 2017 analysis and preferred alternative, and the permissible use of squid under the EC category.

The Council's recent recommendation to establish sculpins in the EC category would limit the use of sculpins consistent with existing regulations for all other EC category species (50 CFR 679.20(i)). The Council does not wish to increase the time required to move sculpins into the EC category by modifying that action, but intends to review the disposition of sculpins consistent with squids and the flexibility provided by the EC category.