

Ecosystem Committee's draft (12/4/2013), for review and public comment

The Council will consider adopting the following policy statement at the February 2014 Council meeting:

Draft Ecosystem Approach for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Value Statement

The Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Aleutian Islands are some of the most biologically productive and unique marine ecosystems in the world, supporting globally significant populations of marine mammals, seabirds, fish, and shellfish. This region produces over half the nation's seafood and supports robust fishing communities, recreational fisheries, and a subsistence way of life. The Arctic ecosystem is a challenging dynamic environment that is experiencing an unprecedented rate of loss of sea ice and other effects of climate change, and is highly vulnerable to anthropogenic disturbances resulting in elevated levels of risk and uncertainty. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has an important stewardship responsibility ~~to for~~ these resources, their current health productivity, and their long term sustainability for future generations.

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Vision Statement

The Council envisions ~~vibrant~~ sustainable fisheries that provide benefits for harvesters, processors, recreational and subsistence users, and fishing communities, which (1) are maintained by healthy, productive, biodiverse, resilient marine ~~habitats and~~ ecosystems that support a range of services; that provide benefits for harvesters, processors, and fishing communities, and (2) support robust populations of marine species at all trophic levels, including marine mammals and seabirds populations and the subsistence way of life; and (23) are managed using a precautionary, transparent, and inclusive process that allows for ~~an~~ analysis of tradeoffs, accounts for changing conditions, and mitigates threats.

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Implementation Strategy

~~It is t~~The Council's ~~intention~~ intention that fishery management ~~will~~ explicitly take into account environmental variability and uncertainty, changes and trends in climate and oceanographic conditions, fluctuations in productivity for managed species and associated ecosystem components, and interrelationships between marine species. Implementation will be based on adaptive management, incorporating the best available science (including local and traditional knowledge), and engage scientists, managers, and the ~~affected~~ public.

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The vision statement shall be given effect through all of the Council's work, including long-term planning initiatives, ~~specific~~ fishery management actions, and science planning to support ecosystem-based fishery management.

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