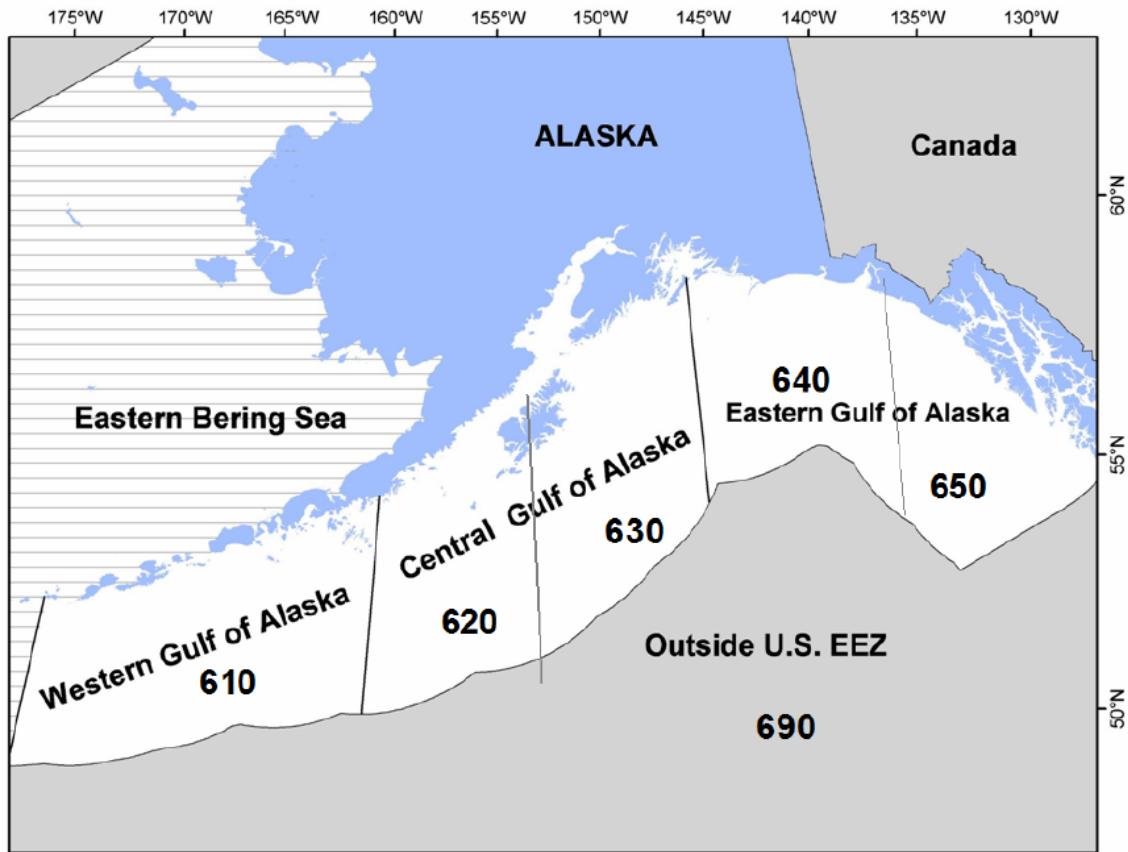


SSC Draft Report April 2018



B-1 Research Priorities, Proposal

- Maintain existing classifications: **Critical Ongoing Monitoring, Strategic, Urgent, and Important.**
- Develop an overarching statement that states that **critical ongoing monitoring projects should continue to be of highest priority.**
- Focus 2018 review on Urgent and Important categories.
- Develop a “**top ten list**” (or some other number) of key research priorities.
- Task each Plan Team to identify their top 3-5 projects for 2018 with an associated rationale.
- SSC reviews the submissions and develops an overall prioritization of all projects, including priorities not associated with particular plan teams (e.g., marine mammals, seabirds).
- For top 10, provide greater depth in consideration of the particular projects, and a rationale for including priorities on the list.
- **Drop review Strategic research priorities in 2018.** Task a workgroup to develop a vision statement for the Council’s near-term and long-term activities, as well as a time frame for periodic review.

B-1 Research Priorities, SSC Recommendations

- The SSC agreed that it seems reasonable to place the Critical Ongoing Monitoring projects into a preamble in 2018.
- SSC will not review Strategic projects **in 2018**.
- The SSC was less comfortable to develop a top-ten list of Urgent and Important projects.
 - Trade-off in priorities for different research categories.
 - Different priorities for funding organizations.

B-1 Research Priorities, SSC Recommendations

- **The SSC agreed that it was reasonable to develop a list of the top 3-5 priorities for each team (e.g., groundfish, crab, scallop), along with the rationale in 2018.**
- Maintain the full suite of priorities in the database.
- Establish of a regular schedule for reviewing strategic and critical on-going monitoring.
- Seek input from granting organizations, regarding the utility of the Council's research priorities in their funding process.
- For strategic planning: consult with other related planning groups, such as the Fishery Ecosystem Plan for the Bering Sea, the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea Regional Action Plans, and the Social Science Planning Team.

B-1 BSIA, SSC Comments

- The revision better emphasizes the key role that an SSC plays.
- The guidance appears to be consistent with standard practices used by the NPFMC SSC, including review of existing information and analysis and documentation of BSIA in its minutes or reports.
- If need, the SSC will assist in the preparation of a report further documenting how BSIA is determined and used.
- Potential concerns:
 - Unclear whether the proposed timing of SSC review, NOAA Fisheries determination, and Council setting of harvest specifications, would require any additional work or meetings.
 - Unclear why a NOAA Fisheries representative should be available during SSC deliberations to bring up concerns about whether BSIA is being used.

B-8 Seabird WG Conservation Update

- The SSC also received a summary of the first two meetings of the newly created Alaska Groundfish Halibut Seabird Working Group (Group).
 - Bycatch estimates expanded from observer data
 - Maps of both species-specific distributions of seabirds and fishery harvest by gear type.
- The SSC expressed strong support for developing a set of leading indicators to identify years of high potential seabird bycatch.
- The SSC looks forward to receiving annual briefings from the Group.

B-8 SSC Recommendations

- Extend the timeframe for consideration back to the 1990s;
- Provide an absolute or relative index of abundance of each species and population trends,
- Include a concise table of seabird bycatch by species by fishery, especially for the highly impacted and/or sensitive species to facilitate comparison of the bycatch in different fisheries.
- Include species of concern to USFWS conservation efforts such as: Aleutian and arctic terns, *Brachyramphus* murrelets, and red-faced cormorants.
- Report the confidence intervals on the numbers of seabirds bycaught across years.
- Provide maps showing locations of bycatch events, by seabird species by monthly periods;
- Complete a geospatial hotspot correlation analysis to identify areas and seasonal timing of intense overlap between fisheries and regions of high seabird density, to identify areas and times of particular concern;
- Include a brief summary of seabird bycatch data from the US West Coast, and other regions, for species with wide ranges to provide context for the extent of impacts documented in Alaska.