



D7 Research Priorities – Plan Team Reports

February 2024 Council Meeting

Action Memo

Council Staff: Dr. Nicole Watson

Action Required:

1. SSC: Review Plan Team written reports.
2. SSC: Suggest or modify new and existing submissions.
3. SSC: Receive public testimony on prioritization of research priorities.

BACKGROUND

At this meeting, the SSC will complete its initial review of research priorities and receive public testimony on the prioritization of the proposed research priorities. The SSC Subgroup for research priorities will meet between February and April 2024 to further review input of the Plan Teams and the SSC to develop a candidate list of >10 research priorities from which to create the top 10 research priority list.

The research priorities final review will take place at the April 2024 Council meeting. At that time, the SSC Subgroup co-chairs will present the candidate list of research priorities, receive public testimony on prioritization, and the SSC will finalize the top 10 research priority list and the proposed new research priorities to be added to the Research Priority Database. The SSC will report to the Council with the finalized list of the top 10 research priorities.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) requires that regional fishery management councils develop “multi-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitats, and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes” (16 U.S.C. 1852(h)(7)). This includes research to support fishery management plans and associated regulations for fisheries requiring conservation and management to prevent overfishing, rebuild depleted fish stocks, and ensure sustainable fishing practices. The Council reviews its research priorities every three years.

The MSA identifies the intended audience for Council research priorities as the Secretary of Commerce and, the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), “for their consideration in developing research priorities and budgets” for Alaska. This information is also provided to research and funding entities including universities, research boards, and other management agencies in the region. In the past, new research priorities were developed and reviewed by the Council’s four stock assessment plan teams, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), and the Council, with public input provided at plan team, SSC, and Council meetings. This review included public input early in the process with the opportunity to suggest new research priorities from July 1 – October 31, 2023. From November 2023 through January 2024, the Plan Teams reviewed new and existing submissions, received public testimony on prioritization, and recommended their top 5 research priorities, a supplementary list and critical ongoing monitoring.

The Plan Team Reports can be found on the SSC’s February [eAgenda](#). Additional background information is available on the Research Priorities [webpage](#) and initial Research Priority [eAgenda](#). A comprehensive list of all new research priority submissions from the public can be found [here](#). The Research Priorities Database can be accessed [here](#).