



New England Fishery Management Council

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**Scientific and Statistical Committee
Social Sciences Advisory Committee
January 27, 2006 – Meeting Summary**

The Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Social Sciences Advisory Committee met jointly in East Boston, MA on January 27, 2006 to discuss future efforts with regard to the Council's Ecosystems Pilot Project.

In this capacity, the Committees have provided the following response:

Recommendation 1:

The Committees recommend that the Council, in considering an ecosystem approach to management, utilize the following two-pronged approach:

- (1) Recognize that non-fishing activities have the potential to impact fisheries, and that fisheries have the potential to impact non-fishing activities. Therefore, the Council needs to actively seek linkages, including considering collaborative approaches with other agencies and jurisdictions, to foster ecosystems approaches to management (EAM).*
- (2) More thoroughly incorporate ecosystems approaches principles into the Council's fisheries management activities. Specifically, the Council needs to become more focused on taking advantage of what is known already as well as evaluating known institutional barriers to incorporating EAM.*

Recommendation 2:

The Committees recommend that the Council proceed with the development of a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP).

Such a plan would consider:

- the role of human communities as part of the ecosystem*
- fishery and non-fishery impacts on the ecosystem w/in the NE region*
- goals for fishery productivity, including setting an optimum yield (OY) definition for each fishery that explicitly incorporates fishery and non-fishery considerations*

The FEP should provide a basis for:

- *evaluation of tradeoffs between fisheries*
- *interaction with non-fisheries marine resource use management agencies*

Finally, the FEP would support and not supplant existing FMPs.

With regard to the Charge document, the Committees have provided the following response:

1a. How important to the Council's activities are non-fishing marine resource uses?

Non-fishing marine resource uses are very important to the Council's activities, though Committees recognize that they are often ignored. The degree of importance will depend on the specific issue and its location

1b. To what degree, if any, should the Council seek to become involved in the planning stages (i.e. scoping, hearings, etc) of such projects?

The committees recommend addressing these cross-jurisdictional impacts through existing structures, though the committees also encourage the Council to incorporate non-fishing marine resource uses explicitly in OY definitions. See Recommendation 2, above.

2a. How important to the Council's activities is coastal pollution?

Coastal pollution issues are very important to federal fishery management.

2b. What might the Council's role, if any, be with regard to this issue?

- 1) *The Council should request an answer to the question "to what extent is the productivity of the marine environment compromised by coastal pollution?" from NOAA.*
- 2) *The Council should express concerns to appropriate agencies on research, regulation, monitoring and enforcement of coastal pollution issues.*

3a. Do ecosystems approaches to management have the potential for improving marine resource stewardship in the short or medium term?

Yes, they do. But developing these approaches should not impede progress on immediate issues.

3b. If so, how important is further development of this Pilot Project to the activities of the Council?

If this project were to go forward, engaging with and educating stakeholders will be critical to gaining buy-in and avoiding the end-runs that commonly undermine management actions.

Additional qualitative information should be extracted from the existing project data that may expand our understanding of the language and categories that people use, as well as their appropriateness to EAM.

Lastly, further development should be commensurate with NOAA Fisheries initiatives.

4. What specific role should ecosystems approaches to management play in future Council activities?

The Council should include the following ecosystem concepts in developing and amending fishery management plans, drawing on existing knowledge of these factors from such sources as NOAA, universities, research institutes and regions that have existing progressive ecosystem-based management programs (i.e Alaska, California, Great Lakes, Canada):

- 1) multi-species interactions*
- 2) multi-fisheries interactions*
- 3) bycatch*
- 4) competition, predation*
- 5) ecosystem-based control rules--ecosystem easement-- (to complement the current use of MSY/OY)*
- 6) appropriate management units*
- 7) documentation of previous social science research on stakeholder inputs and diversity of fishing practices and ecological knowledge*
- 8) ICNAF two-tiered catch quota system*
- 9) Indirect effects of fishing*
- 10) Socio-economic data*

5. What other ideas for incorporating ecosystems approaches should the Council explore in the short term? ...In the medium-to-long term?
- 1) *Encourage innovative and/or expansive concepts/proposals/ideas from NOAA, Council PDTs, the SSC and the SSAC. Make better use of existing knowledge, advice and information sources.*
 - 2) *At the inception of a Fishery Ecosystem Plan, a small group of Council members should meet with a small group of scientists (social and natural) from the NEFSC, SSC, and SSAC to discuss biological/trophic interactions and system-level processes. The action plan would be to put together a draft outline of ecosystem management approaches and the research that such approaches might entail.*
 - 3) *The Council needs to further integrate social science analyses and natural science analyses into its analysis of management options. For example, development of an integrated model of the biological, social and economic impacts of management could be undertaken outside of the immediate regulatory process as a tool for the Council to explore future options.*
 - 4) *The Council should maintain an institutional memory by retaining a dedicated point of contact for ecosystem approaches issues*