



Pacific Fishery Management Council *NEWS RELEASE*

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COUNCIL ADOPTS NEW FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN

PORTLAND, Or. – Today, after over two years of work, the Pacific Fishery Management Council adopted new fishery ecosystem plan. “We now enter into a new era of more sophisticated fishery management,” said Council Chairman Dan Wolford. “We heard strong public testimony calling for more protection for unmanaged forage fish, and the Council’s adoption of this motion today formalizes the Council taking this up this as a fishery management action.”

The Pacific Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Pacific Council recommends management measures for fisheries off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.

The purpose of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan is to enhance the Council’s fishery management with more ecosystem science and to allow broader consideration of ecosystem factors – for example, the food web, climate change, human interactions with fisheries, and habitat. The plan will not replace the Council’s four fishery management plans (for salmon, groundfish, highly migratory species, and coastal pelagic species), but will deliberately insert additional ecosystem science and factors into the decision-making on fishing seasons that occurs under those plans. The new Plan also mandates an annual “State of the Ecosystem” report to the Council to be made at March Council meetings each year.

Several new ecosystem initiatives are connected to the plan. The first relates to protecting currently unmanaged forage fish due to their importance in the marine ecosystem. The Council is not pursuing a permanent moratorium on fishing for forage fish; rather it intends to prohibit the development of new, directed fisheries on forage

species that are not currently managed by the Council or states, until the impacts of any proposed fishery can be fully understood.

There are eight other initiatives related to the Fishery Ecosystem Plan. These relate to effects of harvest policies on stocks, bycatch, habitat, fisheries safety, fisheries jobs, reacting to climate change, socioeconomics, and other factors.

The Council will address the forage fish initiative at its June 20-25 meeting in Garden Grove, California.

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On the Web

- Pacific Fishery Management Council: <http://www.pcouncil.org>