

**Programmatic Groundfish Management Policy  
Annual Review  
2017**

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### 1. The Alaska Groundfish Fisheries Programmatic SEIS

The original EISs for the GOA and BSAI groundfish FMPs were finalized in 1979 and 1981, respectively. In 1998, a Supplemental EIS (SEIS) updating both FMPs was prepared because the fisheries had changed considerably through amendments, regulations, and adaptations to federal law. Additionally, information on marine mammals, sea birds, and fishes were different from that in the original FMPs, including ESA listings for some species. Finally, information about ecosystem processes, the impacts of fisheries, and available management tools had changed since the original EISs.

The 1998 SEIS focused much of its attention on the annual TAC specification process and how prohibited species catch limits were determined. Although TAC specification was the *action* that the SEIS addressed, the analysis addressed a range of related information, including location and timing of fisheries, harvestable amounts, exploitation rates, exploited species, groupings of exploited species, gear types and groupings, allocations, product quality, organic waste and secondary utilization, at-sea and on-land organic discard, trophic levels, habitat alterations, as well as impacts to coastal communities, society, the economy, and the domestic and foreign groundfish markets, in-season management, enforcement, monitoring, stock assessment, and summary analyses. The 1998 SEIS also incorporated updated scientific information about the North Pacific ecosystem, and analyzed this information by considering a range of alternative total allowable catch (TAC) levels.

### 1.1. Litigation

The adequacy of the 1998 SEIS was challenged in District Court (*Greenpeace v. National Marine Fisheries Service*) with plaintiffs arguing that the 1998 SEIS was deficient because it only analyzed alternatives dealing with TAC levels. In its decision, the court determined that the *action* under review in the SEIS should have been the *FMPs* and the numerous regulations managing the groundfish fisheries, rather than the TAC setting process. The decision asserted that NEPA requires NMFS to analyze how the federally-permitted groundfish fisheries (which are consequences of the FMPs) affect the North Pacific ecosystem. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs that the 1998 SEIS was legally inadequate under NEPA, and remanded the document back to NMFS for additional analysis, with direction that a “Programmatic” SEIS (PSEIS) be prepared.

### 1.2. Preparation of the PSEIS

In October, 1999, a five year process of PSEIS preparation (Figure 1) was begun as NMFS published an NOI announcing a PSEIS that would analyze groundfish management under the FMPs as a large-scale program. The “multi-tiered” PSEIS was envisioned as one that would serve to streamline the NEPA process by allowing future EAs and EISs that focus on specific federal actions to reference analyses in the PSEIS. A programmatic EIS is usually prepared at the onset of a new federal program, but in this case, since the GOA and BSAI FMPs had been in place for approximately 25 years, the PSEIS provided a comprehensive review of the existing FMPs. The PSEIS was developed to fulfill NEPA requirements by evaluating the FMPs (as the federal action) for their impacts on the human environment. This evaluation would be achieved by:

- Updating the information contained in the original EISs by providing a historical review of how the groundfish fisheries and the environment have changed since publication of the original EISs.
- Describing how new scientific and fishery information is being utilized.
- Describing the cumulative effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future groundfish fisheries management on the marine ecosystem.
- Analyzing current and alternative management regimes to determine their potential impacts on the human environment.

### 1.3. Alternatives in the PSEIS

The alternatives in the PSEIS consisted of four different policy statements, each presented in a standard framework that would provide management flexibility and allow for adaptation as new information on the ecosystem and the fisheries was obtained. Each of the alternatives was composed of three elements:

1. A management approach statement that described the goals, rationale and assumptions behind the alternative;
2. A set of management objectives that complemented and further refined the goals set forth in the management approach; and,
3. Except for the No Action Alternative, a pair of example FMP “bookends” that illustrated and framed the range of implementing management measures under that alternative.

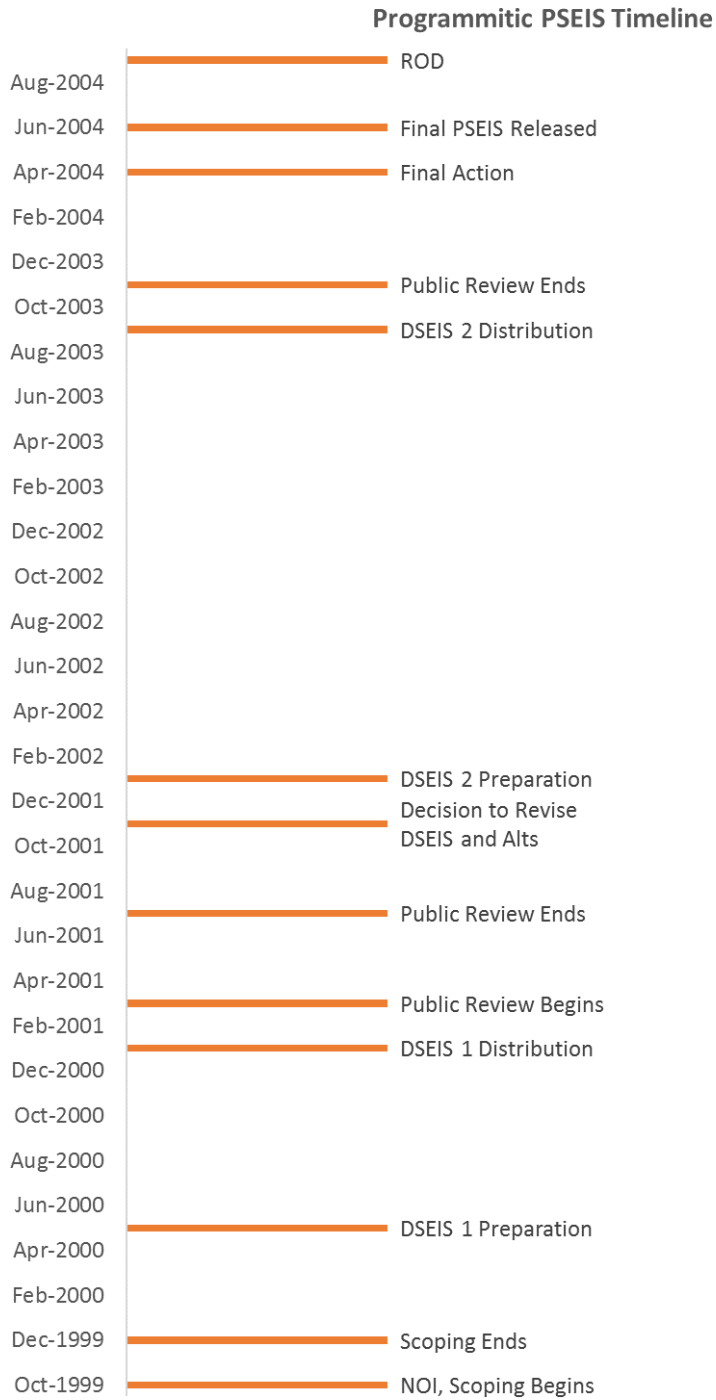


Figure 1. Timeline of events involved in preparation of the Council's Groundfish PSEIS.

The management approach and objectives served to define the direction the Council wished to follow in the management of the fisheries. The example bookends provided practical inputs for analyzing the physical, biological and socioeconomic impacts of the alternatives, and provided the public with a picture of the management measures that could achieve the goals of each of the alternatives going into the future.

The *Preferred Alternative*, which was approved and incorporated into the FMPs (BSAI Am. 81, GOA Am. 74), reflects the Council's current Groundfish Management Policy and Management Objectives. The range of potential management measures, as illustrated by the example FMP bookends (PA.1 and PA.2) retained management flexibility under the MSA to adaptively manage the fishery through future FMP amendments.

### 1.3.1. Preferred Alternative FMP Bookends

*Preferred Alternative FMP Bookend 1 (PA.1)* comprised a conservative management approach that continued existing risk-averse practices, increased conservation-oriented constraints on fisheries, formalized precautionary practices in the FMPs, and initiated scientific review of management measures to assess and improve fishery management.

This FMP bookend built on existing conservative procedures for determining ABC, annual quotas, and the existing suite of closed areas, and implemented changes to the TAC-setting process following a comprehensive review. Precautionary practices such as setting TAC less than or equal to the ABC, and specifying MSSTs for Tier 1-3 stocks in accordance with NS Guidelines, would be formalized in the FMPs. The NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries would continue to use and improve harvest control rules to maintain a spawning stock biomass with the potential to produce sustained yields on a continuing basis, and to distribute allocations by area, season, and gear as appropriate. Efforts to develop ecosystem indicators to be used in TAC-setting, as per ecosystem management principles, would be continued.

In order to balance the needs of social and economic stability with habitat protection and resource conservation, the NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries would develop a Marine Protected Area (MPA) efficacy methodology, including the development of definitions, program goals, objectives, and criteria for establishing MPAs. Additionally, existing habitat and bycatch area restrictions would be maintained. Measures would also be retained to protect ESA-listed species. To minimize bycatch, a moderate reduction of PSC limits in the BSAI would be initiated, and PSC limits or other appropriate measures for protection of crab, herring and salmon would be authorized in the GOA. Effective monitoring and timely reaction to change in the environment and the fisheries would be enhanced through improvements in the Observer Program and existing reporting requirements.

Existing programs addressing excess capacity and overcapitalization were maintained under this example FMP, with continued development of rights-based management to be undertaken as needed. In order to mitigate adverse impacts of fisheries management decisions on fishing communities, and to comply with other national directives, procedures to encourage increased participation of Alaska Natives in fishery management, would be pursued.

*Preferred Alternative FMP Bookend 2 (PA.2)* accelerated adaptive precautionary management by increasing conservation measures that would provide a buffer against uncertainty, instituted research and review of existing measures, and expanded data collection and monitoring programs.

This FMP bookend significantly accelerated precautionary management by incorporating an uncertainty correction into the estimation of ABC for all species. The current precautionary practice of setting TAC less than or equal to ABC would be formalized in the FMP. The calculation of the OY caps would be periodically reviewed to determine their relevancy to current environmental conditions and stock levels. Criteria would be developed and implemented for using key ecosystem indicators in TAC-setting, and other precautionary practices such as developing appropriate harvest strategies for rockfish stocks. In implementing this bookend, data would be collected and analysis undertaken to allow the specification of MSSTs priority stocks in Tiers 4-5. The development of criteria to manage target and nontarget species consistently, and for removing some stocks from the other species and non-specified species management categories, would initially involve breaking sharks out of the other species category for TAC setting and management purposes in the BSAI, as well as breaking sharks and skates out of the other species category in the GOA.

This FMP bookend also reexamined area restrictions in the BSAI and the GOA by reviewing the existing system of closure areas in the BSAI and the GOA in conjunction with developing MPAs. PA.2 considered adopting MPAs, with a guideline of 0 to 20 percent of the EEZ (3 to 200 nm) being closed. The objective of these measures were to provide greater protection to a full range of marine habitats within the 1,000-m bathymetric line. This incorporated an Aleutian Islands management area to protect coral and living bottom habitat, and also any modification to the 2002 Steller sea lion closures. The closed area would indirectly mitigate adverse effects due to fishing. The guideline aimed to provide greater protection for a wide range of species, from Steller sea lions to slope rockfish to prohibited species, while at the same time respecting traditional fishing grounds and maintaining open area access for coastal communities. Additionally, the bookend would extend the existing BSAI bottom-trawl ban on pollock to the GOA.

To increase precaution regarding bycatch, existing PSC limits would be reduced, and limits would be set for all prohibited species in the GOA, with appropriate in-season closure areas. The achievement of these bycatch reductions was expected to be realized through the comprehensive rationalization of all fisheries (except those already part of a cooperative or IFQ program), which reduces concentrated effort in the fisheries, or through bycatch incentive programs implemented in this example FMP.

In accordance with ecosystem principles, the Council and NOAA Fisheries would seek to cooperate with the USFWS to develop fishing methods that reduce incidental take of all seabird and marine mammal species in the longline and trawl fisheries. Procedures would also be pursued to increase consultation with and representation of Alaska Natives in fishery management by incorporating local and traditional knowledge. Increased observer coverage and improvements to the observer data would enhance effective monitoring and timely reaction to change in the environment and the fisheries. Additionally, this bookend explored programs that would expand the mandatory economic data collected from industry while protecting confidentiality.

## 2. Groundfish Management Policy

*As developed through the PSEIS and contained in the Groundfish FMPs, the Council's Programmatic Groundfish Management Policy is as follows:*

The productivity of the North Pacific ecosystem is acknowledged to be among the highest in the world. For the past 25 years, the NPFMC management approach has incorporated forward looking conservation measures that address differing levels of uncertainty. This management approach has, in recent years, been labeled the precautionary approach. The NPFMC's precautionary approach is about applying judicious and responsible fisheries management practices, based on sound scientific research and analysis, proactively rather than reactively, to ensure the sustainability of fishery resources and associated ecosystems for the benefit of future as well as current generations. Recognizing that potential changes in productivity may be caused by fluctuations in natural oceanographic conditions, fisheries, and other, non-fishing, activities, the NPFMC intends to continue to take appropriate measures to insure the continued sustainability of the managed species. It will carry out this objective by considering reasonable, adaptive management measures as described in the MSA and in conformance with the National Standards, the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and other applicable law. This management approach takes into account the National Academy of Science's recommendations on Sustainable Fisheries Policy.

As part of its policy, the NPFMC intends to consider and adopt, as appropriate, measures that accelerate the NPFMC's precautionary, adaptive management approach through community or rights-based management, ecosystem-based management principles that protect managed species from overfishing, and where appropriate and practicable, increase habitat protection and bycatch constraints. All management measures will be based on the best scientific information available. Given this intent, the fishery management goal is to provide sound conservation of the living marine resources; provide socially and economically viable fisheries and fishing communities; minimize human-caused threats to protected species; maintain a healthy marine resource habitat; and incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into management decisions. This management approach recognizes the need to balance many competing uses of marine resources and different social and economic goals for sustainable fishery management including protection of the long-term health of the resource and the optimization of yield. This policy will utilize and improve upon the NPFMC's existing open and transparent process to involve the public in decision-making.

Adaptive management requires regular and periodic review. Objectives identified in this policy statement will be reviewed annually by the NPFMC. The NPFMC will also review, modify, eliminate or consider new issues as appropriate to best carry out the goals and objectives of this management policy. To meet the goals of this overall management approach, the NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries will use the PSEIS as a planning document. To help focus its consideration of potential management measures, it will use the following objectives as guideposts to be re-evaluated as amendments to the FMP are considered over the life of the PSEIS.

### 2.1. Groundfish Management Objectives

#### **Prevent Overfishing:**

1. Adopt conservative harvest levels for multi-species and single species fisheries and specify optimum yield.

2. Continue to use existing optimum yield cap for BSAI (as stated in current law) and GOA groundfish fisheries.
3. Provide for adaptive management by continuing to specify optimum yield as a range.
4. Initiate a scientific review of the adequacy of F40 and adopt improvements as appropriate.
5. Continue to improve the management of species through species categories.

**Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Communities:**

6. Promote conservation while providing for optimum yield in terms of providing the greatest overall benefit to the nation with particular reference to food production, and sustainable opportunities for recreational, subsistence and commercial fishing participants and fishing communities.
7. Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objectives, are also designed to avoid significant disruption of existing social and economic structures.
8. Promote fair and equitable allocation of identified available resources in a manner such that no particular sector, group or entity acquires an excessive share of the privileges.
9. Promote increased safety at sea.

**Preserve Food Web:**

10. Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management.
11. Improve the procedure to adjust ABCs as necessary to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors.
12. Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species.
13. Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions as appropriate.

**Manage Incidental Catch and Reduce Bycatch and Waste:**

14. Continue and improve current incidental catch and bycatch management program.
15. Develop incentive programs for bycatch reduction including the development of mechanisms to facilitate the formation of bycatch pools, VBAs, or other bycatch incentive systems.
16. Encourage research programs to evaluate current population estimates for non-target species with a view to setting appropriate bycatch limits as information becomes available.
17. Continue program to reduce discards by developing management measures that encourage the use of gear and fishing techniques that reduce bycatch which includes economic discards.
18. Continue to manage incidental catch and bycatch through seasonal distribution of TAC and geographical gear restrictions.
19. Continue to account for bycatch mortality in TAC accounting and improve the accuracy of mortality assessments for target, PSC bycatch, and non-commercial species.
20. Control the bycatch of prohibited species through PSC limits or other appropriate measures.
21. Reduce waste to biologically and socially acceptable levels.

**Avoid Impacts to Seabirds and Marine Mammals:**

22. Continue to cooperate with USFWS to protect ESA-listed species, and if appropriate and practicable, other seabird species.
23. Maintain or adjust current protection measures as appropriate to avoid jeopardy to ESA-listed Steller sea lions.
24. Encourage programs to review status of endangered or threatened marine mammal stocks and fishing interactions and develop fishery management measures as appropriate.
25. Continue to cooperate with NOAA Fisheries and USFWS to protect ESA-listed marine mammal species, and if appropriate and practicable, other marine mammal species.

**Reduce and Avoid Impacts to Habitat:**

26. Review and evaluate efficacy of existing habitat protection measures for managed species.
27. Identify and designate EFH and HAPC pursuant to MSA rules, and mitigate fishery impacts as necessary and practicable to continue the sustainability of managed species.

28. Develop a Marine Protected Area policy in coordination with national and state policies.
29. Encourage development of a research program to identify regional baseline habitat information and mapping, subject to funding and staff availability.
30. Develop goals, objectives and criteria to evaluate the efficacy and suitable design of marine protected areas and no-take marine reserves as tools to maintain abundance, diversity, and productivity. Implement marine protected areas if and where appropriate.

**Promote Equitable and Efficient Use of Fishery Resources:**

31. Provide economic and community stability to harvesting and processing sectors through fair allocation of fishery resources.
32. Maintain LLP program and modify as necessary, and further decrease excess fishing capacity and overcapitalization by eliminating latent licenses and extending programs such as community or rights-based management to some or all groundfish fisheries.
33. Provide for adaptive management by periodically evaluating the effectiveness of rationalization programs and the allocation of access rights based on performance.
34. Develop management measures that, when practicable, consider the efficient use of fishery resources taking into account the interest of harvesters, processors, and communities.

**Increase Alaska Native Consultation:**

35. Continue to incorporate local and Traditional Knowledge in fishery management.
36. Consider ways to enhance collection of local and Traditional Knowledge from communities, and incorporate such knowledge in fishery management where appropriate.
37. Increase Alaska Native participation and consultation in fishery management.

**Improve Data Quality, Monitoring and Enforcement:**

38. Increase the utility of groundfish fishery observer data for the conservation and management of living marine resources.
39. Improve groundfish Observer Program, and consider ways to address the disproportionate costs associated with the current funding mechanism.
40. Improve community and regional economic impact costs and benefits through increased data reporting requirements.
41. Increase the quality of monitoring and enforcement data through improved technological means.
42. Encourage a coordinated, long-term ecosystem monitoring program to collect baseline information and compile existing information from a variety of ongoing research initiatives, subject to funding and staff availability.
43. Cooperate with research institutions such as the NPRB in identifying research needs to address pressing fishery issues.
44. Promote enhanced enforceability.
45. Continue to cooperate and coordinate management and enforcement programs with the ADF&G, and Alaska Fish and Wildlife Protection, the USCG, NOAA Fisheries Enforcement, IPHC, federal agencies, and other organizations to meet conservation requirements; promote economically healthy and sustainable fisheries and fishing communities; and maximize efficiencies in management and enforcement programs through continued consultation, coordination, and cooperation.

**3. Evaluating the Continued Applicability of the Programmatic SEIS**

The U.S. Supreme Court has held that supplementing an existing EIS is necessary only if there remains major Federal action to occur. As found in *Oregon Natural Resources Council v. Harell*, “an agency need not supplement an EIS every time new information comes to light after the EIS is finalized. To require otherwise would render agency decision-making intractable.” In other words, a supplement to an EIS is



needed only if the new information is sufficient to show a proposed or remaining action will affect the quality of the human environment in a significant manner or to a significant extent *not already considered*. The Groundfish PSEIS was designed to anticipate the need to adapt management to a continually changing environment. The purpose of the FMP “bookends” was to characterize the range likely future management measures in that environment.

Nevertheless, because fisheries management is dynamic, and because the Council and Agency have broad discretion to manage fisheries consistent with the MSA, the Council and Agency have a duty to continually evaluate new information relevant to the impacts of their actions and also to continually review the sufficiency of the PSEIS in light of those changing conditions. When the conditions and information are significantly different in degree or in kind from the impacts considered in the existing PSEIS, the Council and the agency must prepare a supplement to that PSEIS. The Council monitors conditions and information in a number of ways that are discussed below.

### 3.1. Workplan and Annual Review

The Management Policy is explicitly consistent with the need to monitor its continued appropriateness:

“Adaptive management requires regular and periodic review. Objectives identified in this policy statement will be reviewed annually by the NPFMC. The NPFMC will also review, modify, eliminate or consider new issues as appropriate to best carry out the goals and objectives of this management policy. To meet the goals of this overall management approach, the NPFMC and NOAA Fisheries will use the PSEIS as a planning document.”

In fulfilling its intent to use the PSEIS as a planning document, the Council developed a workplan that serves as a bridge between the Management Policy and the Council’s near term activities. This workplan was not a required part of the PSEIS, but was instead created to provide a tangible expression of the Policy in the context of actions under consideration by the Council. Provided in tabular form for every Council meeting, the workplan includes general priorities, management objectives, recent/current/ongoing/pending actions, a timeframe for actions, and cumulative record of management actions and outcomes (see Table 1 for the current workplan in its entirety).

A more formal review of the Council’s Groundfish Policy and Objectives is accomplished by annual review, which dedicates space on the Council Agenda for focused examination of the Policy and Objectives themselves, as well as thorough consideration of past, current, and pending groundfish actions. Unlike the ongoing availability of the workplan, annual review is a requirement under the FMPs as indicated above. Annual review was last conducted at the April 2016 Council Meeting, and will be conducted at the upcoming April 2017 Council Meeting.

Table 1. The Programmatic Groundfish Management Workplan, as updated through March 22, 2017.

General Priority	Management Objectives	Recent, Current, Ongoing, Pending Activity	2017				2018				Cumulative Management Actions/Outcomes																																			
			Feb	Apr	Jun	Oct	Dec	Feb	Apr	Jun		Oct	Dec																																	
<b>1. Prevent Overfishing</b>  (Maintain Sustainable Harvest)	1. Adopt conservative harvest levels for multi-species and single species fisheries and specify optimum yield.	Ongoing - SAFE and Annual specifications												<b>FMP amendments related to this goal statement</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>105</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2014</td> <td>Provided flexibility for flatfish specifications</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100/91</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2014</td> <td>Included grenadiers in the Ecosystem Component category</td> </tr> <tr> <td>86/76</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2012</td> <td>Restructured Observer Program to reduce statistical bias</td> </tr> <tr> <td>95/87</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2010</td> <td>Incorporated ACL requirements, Move "other species" to target category, Create Ecosystem Component category</td> </tr> <tr> <td>79</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2008</td> <td>OFL/ABC process for "other species"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>69</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2006</td> <td>Established TAC process for "other species"</td> </tr> <tr> <td>63</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2004</td> <td>Moved skates to target category</td> </tr> <tr> <td>48/48</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2004</td> <td>Established current harvest specifications process</td> </tr> </table>	105	BSAI	2014	Provided flexibility for flatfish specifications	100/91	BSAI/GOA	2014	Included grenadiers in the Ecosystem Component category	86/76	BSAI/GOA	2012	Restructured Observer Program to reduce statistical bias	95/87	BSAI/GOA	2010	Incorporated ACL requirements, Move "other species" to target category, Create Ecosystem Component category	79	GOA	2008	OFL/ABC process for "other species"	69	GOA	2006	Established TAC process for "other species"	63	GOA	2004	Moved skates to target category	48/48	BSAI/GOA	2004	Established current harvest specifications process
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4. Provide for periodic reviews of the adequacy of F <sub>40</sub> and adopt improvements, as appropriate.	Ongoing - AFSC responds to CIE reviews as part of specs process																																													
	2009 - BSAI skates TAC breakout 2010 - Ecosystem component created 2014 - Grenadiers to EC 2015 -Working paper on uncertainty in control rules tasked																																													
5. Continue to improve the management of species through species categories.	2015 -BSIERP MSE modeling underway												<b>Regulatory amendments related to this goal statement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual specifications for setting harvest levels</li> </ul>																																	
	Ongoing – Spatial management policy guides species complex and subarea considerations													<b>Other management actions related to this goal statement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Center for International Experts reviews for stock assessments and harvest strategies</li> <li>• Ongoing work on accounting for uncertainty in control rules</li> <li>• Council policy and ongoing discussion of spatial management for stocks</li> </ul>																																
	Ongoing - Squid to EC																																													

General Priority	Management Objectives	Recent, Current, Ongoing, Pending Activity	2017					2018					Cumulative Management Actions/Outcomes
			Feb	Apr	Jun	Oct	Dec	Feb	Apr	Jun	Oct	Dec	
<b>2. Promote Sustainable Fisheries and Communities</b>	<p>6. Promote conservation while providing for optimum yield in terms of the greatest overall benefit to the nation with particular reference to food production, and sustainable opportunities for recreational, subsistence, and commercial fishing participants and fishing communities.</p> <p>7. Promote management measures that, while meeting conservation objectives, are also designed to avoid significant disruption of existing social and economic structures.</p> <p>8. Promote fair and equitable allocation of identified available resources in a manner such that no particular sector, group or entity acquires an excessive share of the privileges.</p> <p>9. Promote increased safety at sea.</p>	<p>These considerations are applied to all management actions.</p>											<p>These objectives represent standards that either separately or in combination apply to virtually all of the discussion, deliberation, and action taken by the Council.</p>

General Priority	Management Objectives	Recent, Current, Ongoing, Pending Activity	2017					2018					Cumulative Management Actions/Outcomes		
			Feb	Apr	Jun	Oct	Dec	Feb	Apr	Jun	Oct	Dec			
<b>3. Preserve Food Web</b>  (Ecosystem Considerations)	10. Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management.	2015 - GOA Ecosystem Report Card													<b>Other management actions related to this goal statement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Uncertainty and ecosystem considerations taken into account during stock assessment and harvest specifications</li> <li>● Ecosystem indices reported and assessed in annual ecosystem SAFE report</li> <li>● Adoption of the Aleutian Islands Fishery Ecosystem Plan, and development of a Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan</li> <li>● Development of ecosystem synthesis reports for the Bering Sea and the Aleutian Islands ecosystem areas, and ongoing development of report for the Gulf of Alaska</li> <li>● Adoption, as Council policy, of an ecosystem vision statement</li> </ul>
		Ongoing - Ecosystem SAFEs, report cards presented annually													
		Pending – BS FEP will include ecosystem indicators and triggers													
		EFH 5 year Review													
	11. Improve the procedure to adjust acceptable biological catch levels as necessary to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors.	Pending - Working paper on uncertainty in control rules - awaiting NS Guidelines revisions													
		Ongoing - BSIERP MSE modeling													
	12. Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species.	Ongoing - Herring PSC limits specified annually													
		13. Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions, as appropriate.	2007 - FEP and brochure published 2011 - AI ecosystem assessment developed 2014 – Ecosystem Vision Statement 2015 - BS FEP												
Ongoing – Ecosystem SAFE															

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<b>4. Manage Incidental Catch and Reduce Bycatch and Waste</b>	14. Continue and improve current incidental catch and bycatch management program.	2011 - National Bycatch Report 2013 - Restructured Obs. Program 2015 - Bycatch limits for BS Chinook revised - pending rulemaking Ongoing - Halibut Management Framework																			<b>FMP amendments related to this goal statement</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>110</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2016</td> <td>● Established Chinook and chum salmon PSC avoidance measures</td> </tr> <tr> <td>111</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2016</td> <td>● Reduced PSC limits for halibut</td> </tr> <tr> <td>79</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2014</td> <td>● Established groundfish retention standard</td> </tr> <tr> <td>84/91</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2014</td> <td>● Established Bering Sea Chinook salmon bycatch restrictions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>94/89</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2012</td> <td>● Established trawl sweep elevation requirement in the flatfish fisheries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>89</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2010</td> <td>● Established GOA area closures to reduce tanner crab bycatch</td> </tr> <tr> <td>93/97</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2008</td> <td>Chinook salmon in the GOA trawl pollock and non-pollock fisheries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>95</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2006</td> <td>● Reduced PSC limits for GOA halibut</td> </tr> <tr> <td>86/76</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2004</td> <td>● Restructured observer program to reduce statistical bias</td> </tr> <tr> <td>103</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2004</td> <td>● Prohibited Pacific cod fishing in Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone</td> </tr> </table>	110	BSAI	2016	● Established Chinook and chum salmon PSC avoidance measures	111	BSAI	2016	● Reduced PSC limits for halibut	79	BSAI	2014	● Established groundfish retention standard	84/91	BSAI/GOA	2014	● Established Bering Sea Chinook salmon bycatch restrictions	94/89	BSAI/GOA	2012	● Established trawl sweep elevation requirement in the flatfish fisheries	89	GOA	2010	● Established GOA area closures to reduce tanner crab bycatch	93/97	BSAI/GOA	2008	Chinook salmon in the GOA trawl pollock and non-pollock fisheries	95	GOA	2006	● Reduced PSC limits for GOA halibut	86/76	BSAI/GOA	2004	● Restructured observer program to reduce statistical bias	103	BSAI/GOA	2004	● Prohibited Pacific cod fishing in Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone
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Ongoing - Review of Obs. Annual Deployment Plan																																																													
15. Develop incentive programs for bycatch reduction including the development of mechanisms to facilitate the formation of bycatch pools, vessel bycatch allowances, or other bycatch incentive systems.	Ongoing - Halibut Management Framework																																																												
	2015, 2016 - Halibut deck sorting EFP																																																												
16. Encourage research programs to evaluate current population estimates for non-target species with a view to setting appropriate bycatch limits, as information becomes available.	Ongoing – Included in research priorities Ongoing - Use of Three River Index Ongoing - Salmon genetics work Ongoing – Forage fish included in Ecosystem SAFE Ongoing – Halibut Management Framework																																																												
	2007 - Partially addressed by arrowtooth MRA analyses for GOA 2010 - Partially addressed by arrowtooth MRA analyses for BSAI Ongoing - Halibut management framework Ongoing - Partially addressed in rockfish program Ongoing - Partially addressed in Council's Spatial Mgmt Policy																																																												
17. Continue program to reduce discards by developing management measures that encourage the use of gear and fishing techniques that reduce bycatch which includes economic discards.																																																													

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<b>4. Manage Incidental Catch and Reduce Bycatch and Waste (cont'd)</b>	18. Continue to manage incidental catch and bycatch through seasonal distribution of total allowable catch and geographical gear restrictions.	2007 - GOA area closures to reduce bairdi crab bycatch 2009 - Trawl sweep elevation requirement in the flatfish fisheries Ongoing – Halibut Management Framework														<p><b>Regulatory amendments related to this goal statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual specifications for setting prohibited species limits</li> <li>● Revisions to MRAs</li> <li>● Revision to regulations for prohibited species donation program and fishmeal</li> </ul> <p><b>Other management actions related to this goal statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Upcoming discussion paper on BSAI crab bycatch</li> <li>● Council encourages research through annual research priorities</li> <li>● NMFS and observer program work on improving statistical methods for bycatch accounting (as part of National Bycatch Report initiative)</li> <li>● Development of a halibut management framework</li> </ul>
	19. Continue to account for bycatch mortality in total allowable catch accounting and improve the accuracy of mortality assessments for target, prohibited species catch, and noncommercial species.	2011 - National Bycatch Report 2013 - Restructured Obs. Program Ongoing – Halibut Management Framework														
		Ongoing – Review of Obs. Annual Deployment Plan														
	20. Control the bycatch of prohibited species through prohibited species catch limits or other appropriate measures.	2016 - Alternative Halibut DMR calculation methods														
		2009 - Partially addressed in BS Chinook bycatch EIS 2010 - Kodiak Tanner crab closures 2011, 2013 - GOA pollock and non-pollock Chinook PSC limits 2012 - GOA halibut PSC limit reduction 2014 - Template for BSAI crab bycatch limits initiated 2015 - Partially addressed in BS salmon bycatch analyses 2015 - Bycatch limits for BS Chinook revised - pending rulemaking Ongoing - revised PSC limits for BS Chinook														
	21. Reduce waste to biologically and socially acceptable levels.	Ongoing - Halibut abundance-based PSC interagency paper														
Ongoing - bycatch management through PSC limits and other actions Ongoing – Halibut Management Framework																

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<b>5. Reduce and Avoid Impacts to Seabirds and Marine Mammals</b>	22. Continue to cooperate with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to protect ESA-listed species, and if appropriate and practicable, other seabird species.	2008 - Avoidance measures in area 4E 2015 - Re-consultation for short-tailed albatross													<p><b>FMP amendments related to this goal statement</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>107</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2014</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walrus protection and transit corridors around Round Island and Cape Pierce</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Regulatory amendments related to this goal statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revisions to seabird avoidance measures, including in Area 4E</li> <li>Revisions to Steller sea lion closures for pollock and cod fisheries in the GOA</li> <li>Revisions to Steller sea lion protection measures for Atka mackerel, Pacific cod, and pollock fisheries in the Aleutian Islands</li> <li>Designation of critical habitat for Cook Inlet beluga whale</li> </ul> <p><b>Other management actions related to this goal statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESA consultations on fishery impacts on listed seabirds and marine mammals</li> <li>Council receives protected species report at each meeting, monitoring issues with seabirds and marine mammals</li> <li>Reconsideration of Steller sea lion closures in 2014 biological opinion and 2014 EIS</li> </ul>	107	BSAI	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walrus protection and transit corridors around Round Island and Cape Pierce</li> </ul>
	107	BSAI	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walrus protection and transit corridors around Round Island and Cape Pierce</li> </ul>															
	23. Maintain or adjust current protection measures as appropriate to avoid jeopardy of extinction or adverse modification to critical habitat for ESA-listed Steller sea lions.	Ongoing – SSL EIS regs in place 2014 – Updated SSL BiOp 2011 - SSL BiOp																	
		Pending - SSL Critical Habitat proposed rule																	
24. Encourage programs to review status of endangered or threatened marine mammal stocks and fishing interactions and develop fishery management measures as appropriate.	Ongoing - Monitoring through the Protected Species Report																		
	25. Continue to cooperate with NMFS and USFWS to protect ESA-listed marine mammal species, and if appropriate and practicable, other marine mammal species.	Ongoing - Monitoring through the Protected Species Report																	

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<b>6. Reduce and Avoid Impacts to Habitat</b>	26. Review and evaluate efficacy of existing habitat protection measures for managed species.	2012 - Council's EFH Consultation Policy 2014 - Partially addressed in crab bycatch limits disc. paper												<p><b>FMP amendments related to this goal statement</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>104</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2015</td> <td>• Designated skate nurseries in Bering Sea as HAPC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>98/90</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2012</td> <td>• Updated EFH information with findings from the 2010 EFH 5-year</td> </tr> <tr> <td>94/89</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2010</td> <td>• Established trawl sweep elevation requirement in the flatfish fisheries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>89</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2008</td> <td>• Established Bering Sea Habitat Conservation area closures for non-pelagic trawling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>78/73</td> <td rowspan="2">BSAI/GOA</td> <td rowspan="2">2006</td> <td rowspan="2">• HAPC and EFH amendments, and associated fishery area closures in the GOA and AI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65/65</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Other management actions related to this goal statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of protected areas for Bering Sea canyons</li> <li>• Discussion paper resulting from EFH 5-year review to look at groundfish impacts on crab EFH (especially red king crab in southwestern Bristol Bay)</li> <li>• Ongoing 2015 EFH 5-year review, including updates to fishing effects model and EFH descriptions</li> <li>• Discussion of a Northern Bering Sea Research Area Research Plan (subsequently tabled)</li> <li>• Council discussion regarding nominating Alaska MPAs to national MPA center register (tabled)</li> <li>• Council encourages research through annual research priorities</li> </ul>	104	BSAI	2015	• Designated skate nurseries in Bering Sea as HAPC	98/90	BSAI/GOA	2012	• Updated EFH information with findings from the 2010 EFH 5-year	94/89	BSAI/GOA	2010	• Established trawl sweep elevation requirement in the flatfish fisheries	89	BSAI	2008	• Established Bering Sea Habitat Conservation area closures for non-pelagic trawling	78/73	BSAI/GOA	2006	• HAPC and EFH amendments, and associated fishery area closures in the GOA and AI	65/65
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	2016 - EFH 5 year review, fishing effects model																																		
	27. Identify and designate essential fish habitat and habitat areas of particular concern pursuant to Magnuson-Stevens Act rules, and mitigate fishery impacts as necessary and practicable to continue the sustainability of managed species.	2007 - BS habitat closures 2007 - Included in research priorities 2008 - NBSRA established 2009 - BS flatfish trawl sweep mods required 2011 - EFH 5-year review and Omnibus Amds approved 2011 - HAPC cycle changed to 5 years 2011 - Discussion paper initiated 2012 - NBSRA plan halted 2013 - HAPC skate nurseries adopted 2014 - Crab bycatch limits discussion paper addresses BBRKC 2015 - Fishery overlap with Pribilof corals																																	
		2016 - EFH 5 year review																																	
	28. Develop a Marine Protected Area policy in coordination with national and state policies.	Ongoing - Actions are developed complementary to Federal MPA Center and AK																																	
	29. Encourage development of a research program to identify regional baseline habitat information and mapping, subject to funding and staff availability.	Ongoing EFH 5-year reviews, including updates to fishing effects model and EFH descriptions  Ongoing - (related) Extensive mapping program through NMFS Habitat Division																																	
	30. Develop goals, objectives and criteria to evaluate the efficacy and suitable design of marine protected areas and no-take marine reserves as tools to maintain abundance, diversity, and productivity. Implement marine protected areas if and where appropriate.	Ongoing - Addressed in purpose and need for individual actions																																	



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<b>7. Promote Equitable and Efficient Use of Fishery Resources</b>	31. Provide economic and community stability to harvesting and processing sectors through fair allocation of fishery resources.	2009-2012 Numerous sector allocations: e.g., Pcod, flatfish, POP, Atka mackerel 2010 Central GOA Rockfish Pgm 2014 - Small boat CDQ Pcod 2015 - Longline pots for sablefish 2015 - AI Pcod shoreplant delivery requirement																		<b>FMP amendments related to this goal statement</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>101</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2016</td> <td>● Allow use of longline pots for sablefish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>109</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2016</td> <td>● Allow for a small boat CDQ Pacific cod fishery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>113</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2016</td> <td>● AI Pcod catcher vessel fishery and shoreplant delivery requirement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>106</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2014</td> <td>● AFA vessel replacement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>102</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2014</td> <td>● Implement a CQE program for sablefish in the BSAI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>94,96</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2013, 2014</td> <td>● Revisions to GOA CQE program entities, revise vessel use caps, allow purchase of small blocks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>99</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2013</td> <td>● BSAI freezer longline maximum length overall adjustment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>85/83</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2011</td> <td>● Sector allocations for Pacific cod</td> </tr> <tr> <td>86</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2010</td> <td>● Fixed gear endorsement in GOA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>78,85,88</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2009, 2011</td> <td>● Rockfish Program revisions; new program authorized</td> </tr> <tr> <td>80,90,93,97</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2007-2012</td> <td>● Vessel replacement and cooperative revisions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>82,92 / 86</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2005-2010</td> <td>● Latent licenses rescinded</td> </tr> <tr> <td>62/62</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2009</td> <td>● Revise the BSAI FMP description of the CV Operational Area and remove sunset date for inshore/offshore sector allocations of pollock and Pacific cod in GOA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>62</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2009</td> <td>● IFQ B quota shareholders can fish on any size vessel</td> </tr> <tr> <td>72</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2008</td> <td>● IRIU rescinded in GOA for shallow water flatfish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>80</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2007</td> <td>● Sector allocations and cooperative formation for 3 flatfish species, POP, and Atka mackerel in BSAI</td> </tr> <tr> <td>68</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2006</td> <td>● Cooperative program for rockfish in central GOA</td> </tr> <tr> <td>82</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2005</td> <td>● AI pollock to the Aleut Corporation</td> </tr> </table>	101	GOA	2016	● Allow use of longline pots for sablefish	109	BSAI	2016	● Allow for a small boat CDQ Pacific cod fishery	113	BSAI	2016	● AI Pcod catcher vessel fishery and shoreplant delivery requirement	106	BSAI	2014	● AFA vessel replacement	102	BSAI	2014	● Implement a CQE program for sablefish in the BSAI	94,96	GOA	2013, 2014	● Revisions to GOA CQE program entities, revise vessel use caps, allow purchase of small blocks	99	BSAI	2013	● BSAI freezer longline maximum length overall adjustment	85/83	BSAI/GOA	2011	● Sector allocations for Pacific cod	86	GOA	2010	● Fixed gear endorsement in GOA	78,85,88	GOA	2009, 2011	● Rockfish Program revisions; new program authorized	80,90,93,97	BSAI	2007-2012	● Vessel replacement and cooperative revisions	82,92 / 86	BSAI/GOA	2005-2010	● Latent licenses rescinded	62/62	BSAI/GOA	2009	● Revise the BSAI FMP description of the CV Operational Area and remove sunset date for inshore/offshore sector allocations of pollock and Pacific cod in GOA	62	GOA	2009	● IFQ B quota shareholders can fish on any size vessel	72	GOA	2008	● IRIU rescinded in GOA for shallow water flatfish	80	BSAI	2007	● Sector allocations and cooperative formation for 3 flatfish species, POP, and Atka mackerel in BSAI	68	GOA	2006	● Cooperative program for rockfish in central GOA	82	BSAI	2005	● AI pollock to the Aleut Corporation
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32. Maintain the license limitation program, modified as necessary, and further decrease excess fishing capacity and overcapitalization by eliminating latent licenses and extending programs such as community or rights-based management to some or all groundfish fisheries.	2008 - Trawl LLP recency in 2008 2009 - GOA fixed gear latent licenses																																																																																											
	33. Provide for adaptive management by periodically evaluating the effectiveness of rationalization programs and the allocation of access rights based on performance.	Ongoing – Regular program reviews for AM80, AFA, Halibut-Sablefish IFQ Pgm, others Ongoing Co-op Reports																																																																																										
34. Develop management measures that, when practicable, consider the efficient use of fishery resources taking into account the interest of harvesters, processors, and communities.	2008 - VMS exemption for dinglebars 2008 - Trawl LLP recency in 2008 2009 - GOA fixed gear latent licenses 2009 - GOA Pcod sector allocations 2010 - GOA rockfish program renewed Ongoing - MRA adjustments																																																																																											

**Regulatory amendments related to this goal statement**

- Modify monitoring and reporting requirements for BSAI cod freezer longliners
- BSAI fixed gear parallel fishery management measures
- Minor revisions to AFA, CDQ, IFQ, Rockfish Programs
- GOA pollock trip limits

**Other management actions related to this goal statement**

- Permit fee authorization (all FMPs)

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<b>8. Increase Alaska Native &amp; Community Consultation</b>	35. Continue to incorporate local and traditional knowledge in fishery management.	2007 - AI FEP Ongoing – BS FEP													<b>FMP amendments related to this goal statement</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>113</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2016</td> <td>• Aleutian Islands Pacific cod catcher vessel fishery and shoreplant delivery requirement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>109</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2016</td> <td>• Allow for a small boat CDQ Pacific cod fishery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>102</td> <td>BSAI</td> <td>2014</td> <td>• Establish CQE program in Area 4B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>96</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2014</td> <td>• Revise the sablefish IFQ program to allow GOA CQEs to transfer and hold small blocks of sablefish quota shares</td> </tr> <tr> <td>94</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2013</td> <td>• Revise the vessel use caps applicable to sablefish quota share held by GOA CQEs</td> </tr> <tr> <td>82</td> <td>GOA</td> <td>2009</td> <td>• AI pollock to the Aleut Corporation</td> </tr> </table>	113	BSAI	2016	• Aleutian Islands Pacific cod catcher vessel fishery and shoreplant delivery requirement	109	BSAI	2016	• Allow for a small boat CDQ Pacific cod fishery	102	BSAI	2014	• Establish CQE program in Area 4B	96	GOA	2014	• Revise the sablefish IFQ program to allow GOA CQEs to transfer and hold small blocks of sablefish quota shares	94	GOA	2013	• Revise the vessel use caps applicable to sablefish quota share held by GOA CQEs	82	GOA	2009	• AI pollock to the Aleut Corporation
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36. Consider ways to enhance collection of local and traditional knowledge from communities, and incorporate such knowledge in fishery management where appropriate.	Pending - Subsistence module in BSFEP														<b>Other management actions related to this goal statement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community outreach and consultation policy adopted by Council in 2008</li> <li>• Community committee helps prioritize outreach (currently focused on BSAI salmon analyses)</li> <li>• Website redesigned to include a rural outreach component</li> </ul>																								
37. Increase Alaska Native participation and consultation in fishery management.	2008 - Protocol approved Ongoing - continued outreach on BSAI salmon bycatch Ongoing - Council Outreach Committee meets periodically																																						

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<b>9. Improve Data Quality, Monitoring and Enforcement</b>	38. Increase the utility of groundfish fishery observer data for the conservation and management of living marine resources.	2008/2010 - Restructuring adopted/approved												<b>FMP amendments related to this goal statement</b> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>112/102</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2016</td> <td>● Change observer coverage category exemptions for small catcher processors</td> </tr> <tr> <td>86/76</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2012</td> <td>● Observer program restructuring</td> </tr> <tr> <td>73/77</td> <td>BSAI/GOA</td> <td>2008</td> <td>● Remove dark rockfish from FMP, allow management by State of Alaska</td> </tr> </table>	112/102	BSAI/GOA	2016	● Change observer coverage category exemptions for small catcher processors	86/76	BSAI/GOA	2012	● Observer program restructuring	73/77	BSAI/GOA	2008	● Remove dark rockfish from FMP, allow management by State of Alaska
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		86/76	BSAI/GOA	2012	● Observer program restructuring																					
		73/77	BSAI/GOA	2008	● Remove dark rockfish from FMP, allow management by State of Alaska																					
		2013 - EM Strategic Plan approved																								
		2015 - Reg Amendments for coverage categories																								
	2016 - Observer coverage on BSAI trawl CVs																									
	2015 - EM Analysis				■																					
	Observer tendering (on hold)																									
	Ongoing – Halibut Management Framework		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■													
	Ongoing - Annual Program Review and Deployment Plan				■	■				■	■															
	39. Develop funding mechanisms that achieve equitable costs to the industry for implementation of the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program.	2008/2010 - Restructuring adopted/approved													<b>Regulatory amendments related to this goal statement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Electronic reporting, online accounting</li> <li>● Changes to VMS requirements (required for sablefish in BS, no longer required for dinglebar lingcod in GOA)</li> <li>● Repeal of vessel incentive program</li> <li>● Changes to observer program to provide flexibility in deployment and improve operational efficiency</li> <li>● Bering Sea Chinook salmon bycatch economic data collection</li> <li>● GOA trawl economic data collection</li> </ul>											
2013 - EM Strategic Plan approved																										
2015 - Reg Amendments for coverage categories																										
2015 - EM Analysis					■																					
Observer coverage on BSAI trawl CVs (on hold)																										
Ongoing - Annual Program Review and Deployment Plan				■	■				■	■																
40. Improve community and regional economic impact costs and benefits through increased data reporting requirements.	2008 - Partially addressed in AM 80																									
	2009 - Partially addressed in BS Chinook bycatch EIS																									
41. Increase the quality of monitoring and enforcement data through improved technology.	Ongoing - EDRs, EDR requirement in GOA																									
	2014 - Advanced features integrated in enforcement precepts																									
	Pending - Discussion paper on VMS/EM for vessels without VMS																									

General Priority	Management Objectives	Recent, Current, Ongoing, Pending Activity	2017					2018					Cumulative Management Actions/Outcomes	
			Feb	Apr	Jun	Oct	Dec	Feb	Apr	Jun	Oct	Dec		
<b>9. Improve Data Quality, Monitoring and Enforcement (cont'd)</b>	42. Encourage a coordinated, long-term ecosystem monitoring program to collect baseline information and compile existing information from a variety of ongoing research initiatives, subject to funding and staff availability.	Ongoing – Research priorities			■					■				<p><b>Other management actions related to this goal statement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual refinement of observer data through the deployment plan</li> <li>● Ongoing work to improve Catch Accounting System</li> <li>● Discussion paper on VMS use and requirements</li> <li>● Electronic monitoring is being developed as a tool for catch monitoring. Pre-implementation program approved for 2016.</li> <li>● Council encourages research through annual research priorities, cooperates with North Pacific Research Board</li> <li>● Council initiated and participates in Alaska Marine Ecosystem Forum, as well as maintaining other relationships with partner entities</li> </ul>
		Ongoing - Ecosystem SAFE											■	
	43. Cooperate with research institutions such as the North Pacific Research Board in identifying research needs to address pressing fishery issues.	Ongoing – Research priorities			■							■		
	44. Promote enhanced enforceability.	2015 Sablefish pot allowance Ongoing – Development of EM options Ongoing – Enforcement precepts, Enforcement committee activitie												
	45. Continue to cooperate and coordinate management and enforcement programs with the Alaska Board of Fish, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Alaska Fish and Wildlife Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard, NMFS Enforcement, International Pacific Halibut Commission, Federal agencies, and other organizations to meet conservation requirements; promote economically healthy and sustainable fisheries and fishing communities; and maximize efficiencies in management and enforcement programs through continued consultation, coordination, and cooperation.	Ongoing - The Council maintains long history of cooperative management with all involved agencies and entities. The Council recognizes and works to achieve the shared goals of its many partners in stewardship of Alaska’s fisheries and its supporting ecosystems. Besides those partners listed in Objective 45, the Council maintains effective working relationships with the North Pacific Fishery Commission, Arctic Council, Bering Sea Fishery Advisory Body, Bering Sea Elders, among others.												
	Ongoing - Halibut Management Framework													

### 3.2. 2015 Supplemental Information Report

The Programmatic Workplan and FMP-mandated annual review both focus on the *activities* of the Council relative to the Groundfish Management Policy. In order to address changes that have occurred in the human environment since the development of the PSEIS, and to review the accumulated information about the managed groundfish fisheries and their impacts, a more wide-ranging analysis is needed.

An approach for this analysis is the preparation of a Supplemental Information Report (SIR), which is a “non-NEPA” document, that the courts have supported as an appropriate tool for determining whether a given EIS continues to provide NEPA compliance. After reviewing discussion papers in 2012 on the timing and need for supplementing or updating the PSEIS, the Council chose to develop a SIR to formally address this issue. The supporting analysis:

- Reviewed changes to the FMPs since the 2004 PSEIS.
- Identified new information and new circumstances since 2004.
- Evaluated whether impacts predicted in the PSEIS were still valid.

Noting that the Council and NMFS could choose to supplement the PSEIS at any time for a variety of reasons, the SIR focused on whether the triggers had been met that would *require* the Council and NMFS to supplement the PSEIS. There are two conditions (triggers) that would require supplementing an EIS:

1. If NMFS and the Council made a substantial change in the proposed action (i.e., the management of the Federal groundfish fisheries) that is relevant to environmental concerns, or
2. If there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the management of the groundfish fisheries or their impacts.

Regarding condition #1, the SIR summarized changes to the management program since the 2004 PSEIS, all of which have been subject to NEPA analysis. The SSC and Council considered these changes in their discussions of this issue in 2012. The SSC discussed the management changes at the March 2012 Council meeting, and found them to be consistent with the preferred alternative evaluated in the 2004 PSEIS. This helped determine that the changes do not represent a substantial change to federal management of the groundfish fisheries that is relevant to environmental concerns.

The Council evaluated the information in the draft SIR, and concluded that the management program was still consistent with the Preferred Alternative in the PSEIS, that a supplemental EIS was not required, and that they would choose not to initiate a new PSEIS.

Regarding condition #2, the SIR provided a comprehensive review of the circumstances and information relevant to environmental concerns, and bearing on the management of the groundfish fisheries or their impacts. Expert reviewers (stock assessment scientists and other fishery science specialists) found that the new information reported in this SIR did not suggest that a new analysis would result in significantly different conclusions for almost all resource components. Some exceptions included added uncertainty in assessing the condition of some fish stocks or previous conclusion with respect to whales. Nevertheless, the necessity to supplement the PSEIS needs to be based on the federal action (management of the groundfish fisheries) as a whole.

In its evaluation of the draft SIR, the Council concluded that the new circumstances and information were not sufficient to trigger supplementing the PSEIS. For those components where there may have been a new conclusion, the experts noted that the groundfish fisheries are not having a significant impact.

In 2015, NOAA Fisheries in the AK Region determined, based on the analyses of the SIR that the “2004 PSEIS continues to provide NEPA compliance for the groundfish FMPs and a supplemental NEPA document is not necessary”

#### **4. Council Actions Outside the Scope of the Groundfish FMPs that Were Affected by the PSEIS**

The Management Objectives established within the Groundfish Management Policy were intended to support decision making under the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs. However, the Policy’s explicitly ecosystem-based fishery management approach and the comprehensive nature of its objectives reflected an evolution in Council thinking about the scope of its responsibilities. This advance contributed to a number of forward-thinking actions outside of the Groundfish FMPs.

##### **4.1. Aleutian Islands Fishery Ecosystem Plan**

The AIFEP can be seen as a direct offshoot of the effort involved in producing the Groundfish PSEIS. Its development very closely followed the finalization of the PSEIS, and this was not coincidental. The unique characteristics of (especially coral habitat in) the Aleutian Islands was very much the product of the review of ecosystem characteristics and processes that occurred during the development of the PSEIS.

Following approval of the PSEIS, the issue of whether the Aleutian Islands should be managed under a separate groundfish FMP was discussed by the Council, and this eventually prompted the development of the AIFEP. Re-working the BSAI Groundfish FMP into separate Bering Sea and AI FMPs was foreseen as a very time-consuming effort on the part of the Council and NMFS, with likely negative consequences to the fisheries during any transition period. Additionally, the FEP could serve as a nexus to specifically focus on ecosystem issues in the AI in the context of EBFM.

The AIFEP was developed to achieve the following purposes:

- a) to integrate information from across the FMPs with regard to the Aleutian Islands, using existing analyses and reports such as the Groundfish PSEIS, the EFH EIS, and the Ecosystem Considerations chapter of the BSAI Groundfish SAFE.
- b) to identify a set of indicators for the Aleutian Islands to evaluate the status of the ecosystem over time
- c) to provide a focal point to develop and refine tools, such as ecosystem models to evaluate the indicators
- d) to identify sources of uncertainty and use them to determine research and data needs
- e) to assist the Council in setting management goals and objectives, and understanding the cumulative effects of management actions

The relationship between the FEP and other Council documents and projects was envisioned as a synergistic one. The purpose of the FEP, however, is to look holistically at the AI ecosystem, at the relationships between the different FMP fisheries, physical and biological characteristics of the ecosystem, human communities, and other socio-economic activities ongoing in the ecosystem area.

The FEP has no legal standing, and is purely a guidance document and resource for the Council. If the Council decides to initiate any action as a result of the evaluations in the FEP, those actions would be subject to the existing process for analysis.

#### 4.2. Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan

Building on lessons learned from the AIFEP, and still in development, the BSFEP was first considered for addition as a tool for the Council in 2013. At that time, and since, there has been extensive national discussion on best practices for EBFM. The Council therefore adopted, as Policy, an ecosystem vision statement that would apply to all its fishery management, including that affecting groundfish fisheries. At the time (Feb 2014) the Council explicitly considered the relationship of the vision statement with the Groundfish Management Policy, and found no inconsistency:

##### ***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 dynamic environment that is experiencing an unprecedented rate of loss of sea ice and other effects of climate change, resulting in elevated levels of risk and uncertainty. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has an important stewardship responsibility for these resources, their productivity, and their sustainability for future generations.

##### ***Vision Statement***

The Council envisions 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 ecosystems that support a range of services; (2) support robust populations of marine species at all trophic levels, including marine mammals and seabirds; and (3) are managed using a precautionary, transparent, and inclusive process that allows for analyses of tradeoffs, accounts for changing conditions, and mitigates threats.

##### ***Implementation Strategy***

The Council intends that fishery management 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, such as habitats and non-managed species, and relationships between marine species. Implementation will be responsive to changes in the ecosystem and our understanding of those dynamics, incorporate the best available science (including local and traditional knowledge), and engage scientists, managers, and the public.

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

#### 4.3. Arctic FMP

In 2009, the Council approved, and NMFS implemented, a new FMP for Fish Resources of the Arctic Management Area (Arctic FMP). The Council's action recognized the different and changing ecological conditions of the Arctic, including warming trends in ocean temperatures, the loss of seasonal ice cover, and the potential long term effects from these changes on the Arctic marine ecosystem. In recognition that

the emergence of unregulated, or inadequately regulated, commercial fisheries could have adverse effects on the Arctic ecosystem and marine resources, and on the subsistence way of life for residents of Arctic communities, the FMP closed all waters of the U.S. Arctic EEZ to commercial harvest of finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animal and plant life.

The Council's management policy for the U.S. Arctic EEZ is an ecosystem-based management policy that proactively applies judicious and responsible fisheries management practices, based on sound scientific research and analysis, to ensure the sustainability of fishery resources, to prevent unregulated or poorly regulated commercial fishing, and to protect associated ecosystems for the benefit of current users and future generations. The management policy recognizes the need to balance competing uses of marine resources and different social and economic goals for sustainable fishery management, including protection of the long-term health of the ecosystem and the optimization of yield from its fish resources. The policy recognizes the complex interactions among ecosystem components, and seeks to protect important species utilized by other ecosystem component species, potential target species, other organisms such as marine mammals and birds, and local residents and communities.