

Protecting Unfished and Unmanaged Forage Fish Species

Overview of Pacific Fishery
Management Council's Approach

December 2015
MAFMC



PACIFIC COAST FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN

**FOR THE U.S. PORTION OF THE
CALIFORNIA CURRENT LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM**

**PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
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WWW.PCOUNCIL.ORG
JULY 2013**

**Enhance PFMC's
species-specific
mgmt. programs**

- More ecosystem science
- Broader ecosystem considerations
- Mgmt. policies to coordinate across FMPs and CA Current Ecosystem (CCE)

ECOSYSTEM INITIATIVES
APPENDIX TO THE
PACIFIC COAST
FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN

**FOR THE U.S. PORTION OF THE
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APPENDIX A

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**Approach to
implementing
FEP: cross
cutting initiatives**

Initiative 1:

**Protecting unfished
and unmanaged
forage fish species**

Purpose

... prohibit new **directed** commercial fishing in Federal waters on unmanaged, unfished forage species until ... adequate opportunity to assess the scientific information ... and consider impacts to existing fisheries, fishing communities and marine ecosystems.

Need

... to proactively protect unmanaged, unfished forage species in U.S. West Coast EEZ in recognition of the importance of these forage fish to the species managed under the Council's FMPs and to the larger CCE.

Key Issues

- **What species to protect**
- **What mechanisms to protect them**
- **How to avoid unintended consequences to existing directed fisheries for other species if incidental impacts on forage are di minimis**
- **What process for developing new forage fisheries consistent w/ Council policy**

What Species to Protect

- For lower trophic level (LTL) species, Ecosystem Team initially identified/assessed:
 - Abundant species or taxonomic groupings in key habitats throughout CCE
 - Their qualitative role in ecosystem
 - Typical habitats and relative abundance
 - Fisheries history or potential
 - Current level of management

Final List of Protected Forage

- Round herring (*Etrumeus teres*) and thread herring (*Opisthonema libertate* and *O. medirastre*)
- Mesopelagic fishes of the families *Myctophidae*, *Bathylagidae*, *Paralepididae*, and *Gonostomatidae*
- Pacific sand lance (*Ammodytes hexapterus*)
- Pacific saury (*Cololabis saira*)
- Silversides (family *Atherinopsidae*)
- Smelts of the family *Osmeridae*
- Pelagic squids (families: *Cranchiidae*, *Gonatidae*, *Histioteuthidae*, *Octopoteuthidae*, *Ommastrephidae* except Humboldt squid (*Dosidicus gigas*), *Onychoteuthidae*, and *Thysanoteuthidae*)

How to Protect

- List of Authorized Fisheries and Gears important to have updated and specifically defined but insufficient to meet Council's purpose and need
- Forage species have cross FMP importance so Council chose omnibus amendment incorporating changes into each of its species FMPs

Regulations Avoid Unintended Consequences

- Do not constrain existing directed fisheries as long as incidental impacts remained '*di minimis*'
- Effectively discourage new targeting unmanaged forage species
- Reasonable enforceability:
 - Defining and prohibiting directed fishing on shared EC forage species (10 mt daily/30 mt annual landing allowance)
 - Simple, clear - creates Individual accountability at trip level but allow for unique events

Process for New Fisheries

- Ultimately would require FMP amendments – moving an EC shared species to a managed species
- Council created policy that would use EFPs as essential step in building scientific information
- Rigorous Council Operating Procedure that outlines consideration of EFPs
- Would require other assessment information and analysis