

## Ecosystem-based Goals and Objectives for IBFMPs: Assumptions, Goals & Principles

**Working assumption:** The transition from species-based to island-based FMPs entails significant changes in management focus that are inherently ecosystem-based and should be reflected in IBFMP goals and objectives. The policy framework of G&Os should facilitate an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries in the region.

**Overarching goal of EBFM:** Manage the fisheries within the limits of ecosystem production to protect habitats, species and functional roles of species so as not to jeopardize a wide range of goods and services provided by a healthy ecosystem,<sup>1</sup> including food, revenue, and recreation for humans.<sup>2</sup>

### Guiding principles for IBFMP G&Os:

- 1. Preserve the diversity and healthy populations of native species at all relevant scales of genetic, species, and community interactions.**
  - Prevent overfishing/rebuild overfished target species
  - Minimize bycatch of non-target species
  - Minimize interactions with endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species
- 2. Account for ecological relationships and functional roles of species in the fishery ecosystem.**
  - Account for ecological roles and services provided by key species in the fishery
  - Protect the prey base, ensure adequate availability of forage fish
  - Avoid adverse effects of selective harvesting (e.g. serial depletion, trophic cascades)
- 3. Manage proactively to conserve habitat diversity and complexity now, while research on “essential” fish habitats continues.**
  - Identify and protect EFH
  - Identify and protect HAPC within EFH (e.g., spawning grounds)
  - Identify and protect the habitats of ETP species (e.g., critical habitats)
- 4. Manage at relevant ecological scales, taking into account spatial and temporal distribution of fishing effort in relation to critical areas and times of year.**
  - Avoid localized or serial depletions
  - Protect critical areas at critical times (e.g., spawning grounds)
- 5. Adopt a precautionary approach in the face of scientific and management uncertainty to avoid irreversible or long-term adverse effects.**
  - Adopt a risk policy that accounts for scientific and management uncertainty
  - Reverse the burden of proof on new, renewed or significantly expanded fisheries
- 6. Establish and maintain effective monitoring, data collection and reporting programs that support management objectives for conservation of fisheries under the Council’s jurisdiction.**
  - Monitor commercial and recreational catch (including bycatch and discards)
  - Monitor trends in key ecosystem indicator species and processes
  - Ensure accountability for achieving management targets and limits
- 7. Promote fair and equitable allocation of fisheries resources that maintain opportunities for commercial and recreational fishing participants and fishing communities.**
  - Take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities
  - Ensure that fishing capacity is balanced with resource availability
  - Address the impacts of recreational participation in the fisheries
- 8. Provide an open, transparent decision-making process that includes ample opportunities for public input and participation.**
  - Provide meaningful opportunities for all stakeholders to comment on and participate in the decision-making process

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<sup>1</sup> For definition of “**healthy ecosystem**,” see 50 CFR § 600.815(a): an ecosystem in which productive capacity and habitat is maintained, diversity of the flora and fauna is preserved, and the system retains the ability to regulate itself. Such an ecosystem should be similar to undisturbed ecosystems with regard to productivity, nutrient dynamics, trophic structure, species richness, stability, resilience, contamination levels, and the frequency of diseased organisms.

<sup>2</sup> National Research Council (1999), *Sustaining Marine Fisheries*, Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 164 pp.