



Photo: Ocean Conservancy

Ecosystem-based Management of US Pacific Pelagic Fisheries

The Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) was developed by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council to regulate the harvests of pelagic species by US vessels operating in the offshore waters of the central and western Pacific Ocean. Because ecosystems vary overtime, this ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management is adaptive and takes into account ecosystem knowledge and uncertainties, considers multiple external influences (domestic and international), and strives to balance diverse social objectives.

Ecosystem Issues

- Climate change and its impacts on the ocean's primary productivity areas
- Fishing impacts on bycatch, forage fish and protected species
- Non-fishing activities leading to pollution, nutrient loading and ocean acidification
- Marine debris

Management Structure and Community Participation

The Pacific Pelagic FEP fosters collaboration with territorial, state, federal and international governments and non-government organizations to address the social, cultural, economic, biological, ecological and other scientific issues related to successful ecosystem management.

The FEP also facilitates enhanced involvement in the decision-making process by communities, especially those who rely on the environment for their livelihood, social relations, cultural identity and nutrition. The bottom-up approach begins with recommendations received during public meetings and through several advisory groups, including recently established Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committees, which focus on impacts on the marine ecosystem.

The Council actively participates in the development and implementation of international agreements and research regarding marine resources. The most important international issues for the Pacific Pelagic FEP are the international management of highly migratory species (particularly tunas) and conservation of protected species (especially, sea turtles and whales).