



Council Research Priorities NMFS Responses and Ways Forward



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

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BOTTOM LINE(S) UP FRONT

- While there has not been a “systematic” process whereby Councils receive feedback from NMFS on the Councils’ priorities, we concur with the need and benefits of formalizing such a process including priorities’ definitions.
- We should build on the practice that NMFS staff already participate in the Councils’ discussion of priorities (through membership in MTs, PTs, SSCs, etc.), and hence are aware of Councils’ priorities.
- Given multiple regional priorities: Councils, Centers, Regional Offices, Commissions, NPRB, etc., increased discussion and coordination of priorities – across all bodies – would benefit all.

RESPONSE/STATUS FROM NE, SE, NW & SWFSCs

- Have not been “formally” approached for comments on Councils’ 5-year priorities. (Caveat: several new SCDs.)
- Staff participate in the Councils’ bodies where priorities are defined and discussed. As such, NMFS staff are involved in the development of the priorities, and also help their implementation.
- Given multiple priorities associated with assessments, Councils, Centers, Regional Offices, Commissions, etc., better coordination would be welcome.

RESPONSE/STATUS FROM PIFSC

- Prior to the WPFMC's current *"5-yr research priorities under MSRA"*, unclear whether the Council formally reached out to PIFSC.
- During the current plan's drafting, Council and PIFSC reps from all programs met to align the Council's proposed priorities with PIFSC activities and clarify expectations, including what PIFSC could help deliver.
- There is a regular check-in on the status of activities.

RESPONSE/STATUS FROM AFSC

- At the Feb NPFMC meeting each year, the AFSC SCD presents a *State of the Center* update to the Council and the SSC. At the Feb 2018 Council meeting, AFSC SCD informed the SSC that the current list of 140-plus research activities was difficult to interpret, in terms of priorities.
- ASFC SCD requested a subset of priorities from the SSC along the lines of "*what should be the last few research projects funded before we turn out the lights*".
- The SSC has not had time to address the SCD's request.

EXCERPTS FROM NPFMC'S PROCESS

- NPFMC attempts to review annually research priorities at a single meeting. The priorities list has increased – currently (May 2018) there are 168 entries. In 2018, trying to pick a top 10 list of Urgent/Important projects.
- Recent discussions resulted in research priorities defined as (also see slide at the end of this PPT):
 - **Critical Ongoing Monitoring** (remain highest priority)
 - **Strategic** (next year 2019[?])
 - **Urgent** (to be reviewed in 2018)
 - **Important** (to be reviewed in 2018)
- Following the June meeting, the updated five-year research priorities are provided to the Secretary of Commerce, the AFSC, as well as research and funding entities.

Possible steps to bridge current gaps in priorities' discussion

- Formalize discussion and definitions within [and across] Councils, taking advantage of participation of NMFS staff on SSCs, MTs and other Council bodies.
- Formalize the [yearly] request for NMFS Science Centers [jointly with ROs] to comment on Council priorities
- NMFS to provide:
 - a written response to the Councils' research priorities and possible actions.
 - a statement of NMFS research priorities, and how/where Council-NMFS research priorities are related.

Thank you



NPFSC's Research Priority Definitions

1. Priorities identified and prioritized by Council Plan Teams and then entered into database:
 - a. **CRITICAL ONGOING MONITORING:** Information provided by monitoring activities in this category (1) provide an essential management function; (2) cannot likely be acquired through other means; or (3) are required by regulation. This is monitoring essential to maintaining our compliance with federal requirements, including National Standards, or necessary for the ongoing management of the fishery. Postponement would have a significant and immediate impact on management.
 - b. **URGENT:** Research that is essential for compliance with federal requirements, including National Standards, or that has been identified by management as necessary to aid decision-making. It is expected that a one or two year project would meet the information need. Postponement would have a significant impact on management.
 - c. **IMPORTANT (Near Term):** Obtaining a new set of data or research result that is likely to aid in the evaluation of a near term or ongoing management goal. The research might involve a time-limited program or work that could continue indefinitely. Postponement will not have an immediate impact on fishery management; however, the information generated will likely inform near term (e.g., <5 year) Council actions.
2. **STRATEGIC (Future Needs):** Research that is valuable but is not associated with an immediate need or near-term (e.g., <5years) Council action.

SSC and Council make final list. Following the June meeting, the updated five-year research priorities are provided to the Secretary of Commerce, the AFSC, as well as research and funding entities including the U of Alaska, U of Washington, Oregon State University, NPRB, ADF&G and AOOS.

In 2018, trying to pick a top 10 list of Urgent/Important projects.