

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS ECOSYSTEM TEAM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Establishment. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) shall establish the Aleutian Islands Ecosystem Team (AIET) for the continued development of the Aleutian Islands Fishery Ecosystem Plan (AI FEP). The AIET will update and maintain information on ecosystem interactions as they relate to the Aleutian Islands ecosystem¹ by periodically updating the AI FEP.
2. Membership. AIET members will be appointed from government agencies, academic institutions, or organizations having expertise relating to the Aleutian Islands. Collectively, members should have experience to address the key ecosystem issues of the Aleutian Islands: fishery species biology and assessment, marine mammals, seabirds, ecosystem and food web modeling, habitat, physical oceanography, fishery management, economics, and anthropology. Normally, the AIET will also have at least one member from each of the Council's Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Crab and Groundfish Plan Teams, and the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) Resource Ecology and Ecosystem Modeling Division (which is responsible for preparing the annual Ecosystem Considerations report). With the consent of the sponsoring agency or institution, nominations may be made by the Council, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), the Advisory Panel (AP), the Ecosystem Committee, or the AIET. All nominations will be subject to approval by the SSC, with the Council retaining final appointment authority. Appointments should reflect the AIET's function to evaluate and make recommendations on ecosystem issues related to the Aleutian Islands.
3. Organization. The AIET will be directed by a chairperson, and may divide some of its responsibilities among work groups organized according to subject matter.
 - (a) Rules of order. In general, rules of order will be informal. AIET decisions will be reached by consensus, whenever possible. If a decision is required and consensus cannot be reached, the opinion of the majority will prevail. In representing the AIET publicly, the spokesperson will take care to relate AIET opinions accurately, noting points of concern where consensus cannot be reached.
 - (b) Meetings. In so far as is practicable, the AIET will meet annually to discuss updates to the status of the AI ecosystem, and updates or further development of the AI FEP. The preferable timing for this meeting will be early in the calendar year. The AIET chairperson may call other meetings as necessary. A draft agenda will be prepared in advance of each meeting by the Council staff in consultation with the chairperson, and may be revised by the AIET during the meeting. Minutes of each meeting will be prepared by the Council staff, and reported to the Council's Ecosystem Committee, the SSC, and the Council by the chairperson (or designee).
 - (c) Selection of officers. The AIET Chair will be selected at the meeting preceding the annual AIET meeting or as vacancies arise.

¹ For the purposes of the AI FEP, the Aleutian Islands ecosystem is defined as the portion of the archipelago ranging from Samalga Pass (169° W. longitude) to the western boundary of the exclusive economic zone, at 170° E. longitude.

4. Functions. The AIET's primary function is to provide the Council with the best available scientific information about the AI ecosystem, to provide a context for management actions affecting the Aleutian Islands.
 - (a) AI FEP. The AIET is responsible for updates and new analysis for the AI FEP. The AI FEP provides the Council with a synthesis of available information on the Aleutian Islands. The FEP also identifies key ecosystem interactions in the Aleutians, and a framework of indicators for monitoring these interactions. A risk assessment is also included, to provide general guidance to the Council on priority areas and issues for management attention and further research and analysis. For each ecosystem interaction, the FEP identifies how risk associated with the interaction is currently addressed by the Council, and what other actions the Council might consider to mitigate risk. The AIET will review the FEP on an annual basis, decide whether new information should be incorporated in the FEP, and update and expand the analysis in the FEP as appropriate.
 - (b) Facilitate the use of the AI FEP in Council management. The AIET may also play a role in facilitating the use of the FEP as a management tool for actions related to the Aleutian Islands. The AIET will communicate information and reports flowing through the Ecosystem Committee to the Council and SSC, typically by making reports to the BSAI Plan Teams.
 - (i) Council BSAI Crab and Groundfish Plan Teams. The AIET will interface with the Crab and Groundfish Plan Teams both by members who participate on both Teams, and also through targeted presentations and input as appropriate. Any recommendations from the AIET that overlap with the responsibilities of the Plan Teams should be made directly to the Plan Teams, and not only to the SSC or the Council.
 - (ii) Ecosystem Assessment and Ecosystem Considerations report. The AI FEP identifies key interactions and associated ecosystem indicators for the Aleutian Islands, which are tracked through the AFSC's Ecosystem Considerations report and Ecosystem Assessment. To the extent that it is useful, the AIET may be able to provide strategic assistance in focusing the Ecosystem Assessment on key issues for the Aleutian Islands.
 - (iii) The AIET should strive to communicate the findings of the AI FEP to State, Federal, and Council analysts as appropriate, so that it can be incorporated early in the analytical process.