

**E1 Staff Tasking - Squid Management**  
**Council motion October 13, 2015**

The Council moves the following problem statement and suite of alternatives for an analysis of moving squid species into the Ecosystem Component in both the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs.

Draft problem statement:

Establishing appropriate catch specifications for squid species in the BSAI and GOA has been problematic. The abundance of squid in the BSAI and GOA is uncertain and trawl survey biomass estimates, while available, likely greatly underestimate the true population level. Development of biological reference points is complicated by a lack of information. OFL and ABC specifications for squid have been based on average catch calculations which poorly estimate the OFL and potentially constrain fisheries. Squid are short-lived, highly productive, and an important prey species. There are no directed fisheries for squid in either the BSAI or GOA, there is limited retention, and there are no conservation concerns for squid populations in either region. According to the National Standard 1 guidelines, in order to be designated as an “ecosystem component” (EC), the species or species group should be a non-targeted species or species group; not subject to overfishing, overfished, or approaching an overfished condition; not likely to become subject to overfishing or overfished in the absence of conservation and management measures; and not generally retained (a small amount could be retained) for sale or personal use. As such, moving squid to the Ecosystem Component seems to meet the intent of this category in the FMPs, and will continue to promote conservation and management measures for squid while alleviating unnecessary constraints on other groundfish fisheries.

Alternative 1: Status quo. Continue to manage squid ‘in the fishery’ in both the BSAI and GOA groundfish FMPs. OFL, ABC and TAC will continue to be set for squid in both areas. Stock assessments for squid will continue to be done.

Alternative 2: Move squid in both BSAI and GOA FMPs into the ‘Ecosystem Component’. Catch specifications (OFL, ABC, TAC) will no longer be required. Directed fishing for squid species would be prohibited.

Option 1: Continue to monitor and report catch of squid species annually and continue to report on the status of the stock in periodic stock assessments for squid in both BSAI and GOA.

Option 2: Establish an MRA for squid species as incidental catch in the BSAI and GOA using the MRAs (20%) in tables 10 and 11 of 50 CFR 678 when directed fishing for groundfish species at a level to discourage retention while allowing flexibility to prosecute groundfish fisheries.

Suboption 1: establish MRA at 2% consistent with forage fish species

Suboption 2: establish MRA at 10%