

**WESTERN REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NMFS NATIONAL CLIMATE  
SCIENCE STRATEGY**

John Stein (NW Fisheries Science Center Director)  
Cisco Werner (SW Fisheries Science Center Director)  
Michelle McClure (FRAM Division Director, NW Fisheries Science Center)

NOAA Fisheries recently released its final National Climate Science Strategy, which provides general guidance for its science arm to develop and deliver scientific information in support of the management of our living marine resources under climate change. Now, the agency is developing Regional Action Plans that will establish regional scientific priorities and guide more local efforts to conduct science for fishery and protected resource management given these changing environmental conditions. Specifically, the purpose of these Regional Action plans (from the NMFS Regional Action Plan Guidance memo) is to:

- 1. Identify strengths, weaknesses, priority needs and actions to implement the seven NCSS Objectives in each region over the next five years.*
- 2. Increase awareness, partnerships and support for these efforts internally and externally at regional to national scales.*

For the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem, including its associated watersheds, the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers will be jointly developing a Western Regional Action Plan (WRAP). We anticipate that a discussion draft will be available in January 2016; the final WRAP is due in October 2016. Its content will drive NOAA Fisheries' climate-related research on the U.S. west coast for the next five years.

The scientific work that will be prioritized for the Science Centers through this process is directly applicable to research needs identified by the Pacific Fisheries Management Council in its most recent "Research and Data Needs" document. Specifically, the research identified by the Council include investigation into climate change effects and mitigation for species in all four Fishery Management Plans as well as efforts to identify linkages between climate effects and drivers of recruitment, distribution and abundance for these commercially and recreationally important species. In addition, the key research needs to support Ecosystem Based Fishery Management identified in this document also include climate-based inquiry.

We are writing to request time with the Council and its Advisory Bodies at the March and/or April meetings in order to discuss the content of our discussion draft and receive feedback about the appropriateness and relative priority of the scientific work that we initially propose for this effort. This time frame will allow the Council to have substantial time to review the draft document and provide NMFS sufficient time to respond substantively to comments and concerns the Council and its advisors may have about the proposed work.