

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FISHERY  
ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVES: SCOPING AND SELECTION

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) received a presentation from Dr. Kit Dahl on the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) Report on Potential Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiatives: *Climate Shift Initiative and Fishing Communities Initiative* (Agenda Item I.2.a.)

In response to a Council request at the March meeting, the EWG provided more information and potential workload estimates for three initiatives. (A.2.7 and A.2.6 had been combined, but the EWG recommended separating them into two distinct initiatives):

- A cross-fishery management plan (FMP) initiative on the effects of near-term climate shift and long-term climate change on fish, fisheries, and fishing communities (A.2.8).
- A cross-FMP initiative evaluating the socio-economic effects of various fishery management programs on fishing communities (A.2.7)
- A human recruitment to fisheries initiative (A.2.6)

The CPSAS agrees that all initiatives identified by the EWG are very important, but because the action at the September Council meeting is to select one initiative for implementation now, and because the workload for the climate change initiative is likely to require several years, the majority of the CPSAS suggest that the Council advance Initiative A.2.7, Socio-Economic effects of fisheries management on fishing communities, as the immediate priority. One CPSAS member prefers selection of A.2.8, A cross-FMP initiative on the effects of near-term climate shift and long-term climate change on fish, fisheries, and fishing communities, with rationale included below as a minority statement.

The majority of the CPSAS support moving forward with Initiative A.2.7, for the following reasons, among others:

- The potential to increase operational flexibility, bring more stability, improve safety, and better support fishing-related community infrastructure;
- The Magnuson Act National Standard 8 directive to take into account the importance of fishery resources to fishing communities in order to minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities;
- The potential to identify whether and how Federal fishery management policies could have unintended consequences on fishing communities, and/or inadvertently create disincentives for new people to join or advance in fishing professions.

In addition, the EWG report notes several suggested topics for a workshop, and the following could be especially important issues to be considered:

- Which communities are tied to which fisheries;
- Vessel displacement and mobility;
- Which ports are more vulnerable to climate change;

- The effects of declared fishery disasters (for example, the recent request by Acting Governor Newsom for a declaration of fishery failure for California's sardine fishery, which will be closed for the third straight year in 2017).

Given the demographics of the fleet and the economic and regulatory challenges facing the CPS fishery, Initiative A.2.7 should also inform Initiative A.2.6 (Human Recruitment to Fisheries). Profitability is a primary driver for entering and remaining in the fishing business, but in light of the uncertain future precipitated by existing regulations, the Council should consider the first question of how regulations and policy can help provide socio-economic opportunity for the current participants to achieve a sustainable future and profitable bottom line.

The CPSAS also offers comments on Initiative A.2.8, Cross-FMP Effects of Climate Shift:

While the majority of the CPSAS places a higher priority on Initiative A.2.7, we also support Initiative A.2.8 (Effects of Climate Shift), and note the following, should Initiative A.2.8 be selected now or in the future. A number of Federal, state and tribal groups are now engaged in research on ocean acidification (OA) and potential future climate change impacts. One such collaboration involving the shellfish industry, scientists, NOAA and state agencies on the West Coast is the California Current Acidification Network (C-CAN) (<http://c-can.info>). The Council could play a facilitative role, particularly considering the effects of a changing ocean on Council-managed fishery resources. If Initiative A.2.8 moves forward, the Council should consider designating an ad hoc Climate Change-OA working group as a subset of the EWG, also involving members of other advisory bodies, including the CPSAS, to communicate and interact with the OA research community and other relevant groups as part of this Initiative.

*Minority Statement:*

One CPSAS member (the conservation representative) recommends the Council select the Cross-FMP Climate Shift Initiative A.2.8 for further development and action. The conservation representative suggests that a Climate Shift Initiative is especially ripe for advancement at this time and can utilize existing science and policy to investigate and develop areas of work such as: Management Strategy Evaluations to identify management approaches that are robust to the effects of climate change; implementation of existing best practices for climate-ready stock assessments; development of climate-ready indicators; and exploration of options to directly prepare fishing communities for climate-related impacts. With respect to this last item, the Conservation Representative appreciates that the Climate Shift initiative as proposed by the EWG includes a significant focus on socio-economic needs and impacts associated with climate change, alongside its emphasis on ecosystem function and fisheries.

The entire CPSAS again commends the EWG for another comprehensive and thoughtful report.

PFMC  
09/14/17