

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE
FINAL FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed the public draft copy of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP), its initiatives, and scientific products related to ecosystem-based fisheries management. In March, Ms. Yvonne de Reynier of the Ecosystem Plan Development Team provided a summary of report updates and participated in the discussion.

The SSC considers the scientific information presented in the FEP to be the best available science for advising the Council on ecosystem considerations for management. The Plan provides appropriate flexibility for incorporation of ecosystem considerations in stock assessments and harvest control rules. The SSC will continue to evaluate the science used in analyses of ecosystem condition and effects on Fishery Management Plan stocks. Currently, the SSC can assist this effort in four ways:

- 1 Review the initiatives in Appendix 1 of the FEP, identifying those that are largely science-driven, feasible with existing tools and data, and most likely to improve management. The Ecosystem Plan Development Team has requested SSC input on prioritization of initiatives.
- 2 Provide feedback on the State of the California Current report document to improve its utility as an advisory document.
- 3 Review the Ecosystem Considerations sections added to this year's stock assessments for future standardization of the content of these sections.
- 4 Meet with the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment teams at Northwest Fisheries Science Center and Southwest Fisheries Science Center to discuss Integrated Ecosystem Assessment products and their incorporation into assessments and other Council documents. This is an important step for FEP implementation.

The SSC discussed its role in the evolving applications of ecosystem-based management by the Council. Some review tasks are straightforward, such as evaluation of the data or analyses used to create the California Current report. A more difficult task is to evaluate and advise on the appropriate use of ecosystem-based indicators and proposed thresholds in harvest control rules. This will require the same scrutiny as the methods used in stock assessments. For example, the SSC recently led a review of the environmental parameters used in the harvest control rule for sardine (Agenda Item I.1). Ecosystem considerations for stock assessments should be developed by stock assessment teams and reviewed through the Stock Assessment Review Panel process.

The SSC identified some outdated information in the FEP about models and data used in economic analyses (Section 4). Suggested corrections have been forwarded to Ms. De Reynier and the Ecosystem Plan Development Team. These edits should be incorporated in the final FEP.