COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT (IEA) REPORT

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) heard a presentation by Brian Wells, from the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, reviewing progress on the cooperative effort by the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers to develop an annual Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Report.

The CPSAS appreciates the work done to date, and agrees that the report should remain advisory for the foreseeable future, particularly in light of the acknowledgement that current ecosystem models don’t accurately forecast CPS due to their boom / bust cycles.

CPSAS members expressed concern with various aspects of the report:

- Currently the IEA does not adequately assess the nearshore component of CPS stocks, particularly in the Southern California Bight. This is problematic because the IEA Team recommended including Pacific sardine in its next steps.
- The CPSAS recommends that future research include the nearshore area in the Southern California Bight, as it represents a significant portion of CPS resources.
- Past research surveys have not occurred during peak summer feeding seasons in the Pacific Northwest and Canada, when sardines are aggregated. The IEA Team should include consideration of this data gap in future work.
- The CPSAS expresses appreciation of the IEA Team’s goals to assess the forage community as a whole.

The conservation representative commented that the IEA may be a helpful tool to advance ecosystem-based fishery management, including the Fishery Ecosystem Plan. The needs statement of the PFMC Fishery Ecosystem Plan includes the need for understanding the effects of fishery management measures on the California Current ecosystem. As currently drafted, the IEA does not evaluate the effects of fishery management on the ecosystem. Therefore, the conservation representative requests that future iterations of the IEA evaluate the effects of the fisheries on the ecosystem to better inform the Council management process and future management decisions.

PFMC
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