

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
WORK LOAD PRIORITIES AND DRAFT SEPTEMBER 2005 COUNCIL MEETING

During a special session on Monday, Dr. Jacquelynne King presented a North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) report to Council advisory bodies on recent changes in the North Pacific. This report was a response to a request from NMFS for scientific advice concerning the state of the North Pacific ecosystem. The report indicated that a climatic regime shift occurred in 1998, and the California Current ecosystem has been strongly affected by that shift. Following this session, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) discussed whether timely information on ecosystem status would be helpful to the Council process. For example, it is widely recognized that recent increases in salmon returns and improved rockfish recruitment are a result of more favorable ocean conditions. Yet Council advisory bodies do not receive information on the conditions that led to improved ocean survival, nor an evaluation of whether these conditions are likely to persist into the future.

Scientists within NMFS and in academic institutions along the West Coast have been among the leaders in research on the effects of climate on marine ecosystems. The California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) organization traditionally includes a 'Status of the California Current' report in its annual *CalCOFI Reports* publication, and PICES and other organizations in the North Pacific are in the process of developing ecosystem status reports. The SSC recommends the Council consider an annual report on the status of the California Current ecosystem. With Council approval, the SSC is willing to convene a meeting of fisheries biologists, marine biologists, and biological and physical oceanographers to consider the form and content of an annual ecosystem report to Council. The SSC notes that this is only one of the potential off-year activities that could involve SSC participation.

PFMC
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