

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FISHERY  
ECOSYSTEM PLAN COORDINATED ECOSYSTEM INDICATOR REVIEW INITIATIVE

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) received a presentation by Dr. Kit Dahl on the Council's Ecosystem Indicator Review Initiative. The CPSAS appreciates the work by the Ecosystem Workgroup and the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers. Dr. Dahl stated that ecosystem-based management is not yet at a point that ecosystem indicators should be used for fisheries management decisions; however, the CPSAS has recommendations for which ecosystem indicators to prioritize.

Ecosystem indicators should include oceanographic conditions such as upwelling, El Niño Southern Oscillation cycles (ENSO), Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO), sea surface temperature, and ocean acidification. Pteropods should be monitored, as an indicator of ocean acidification. In addition, the CPSAS supports continued tracking of factors related to short-term and long-term climate change, and the potential effects on Council-managed species.

Studies indicate that fishing pressure on CPS is generally negligible compared to the large-scale effects of environmental forcing. Further, this research is finding that well-managed fisheries, such as CPS, have a negligible impact on managed stocks and dependent predators (Punt et al, 2016; Hilborn et al, 2016 submitted). This should be recognized and the studies highlighted in the Fisheries Ecosystem Plan (FEP) and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA), along with analysis of the economic impact of precautionary management of CPS fisheries on fishermen and fishing communities. The tradeoffs between protection of dependent predators and resilient fishing communities should be examined in more depth.

Stock assessments themselves are the most important ecosystem indicator, even more important than they were in the past. Currently, stock assessments are the primary indicators that can be used in resource management. Therefore, resources for individual stock assessments should not be sacrificed to develop other ecosystem indicators. If necessary, additional resources should be brought in to develop other ecosystem indicators. The fishing industry depends on accurate stock assessment information in order to make sound business decisions and financial investments. The Magnuson Act is intended to provide a balance between the human environment and the fisheries ecosystem, considering the needs of both.

Finally, the CPSAS appreciates the annual California Current Ecosystem Status Report, as well as the recent webinar series presented by the Ecosystem Working Group, and thanks the Ecosystem Workgroup and the scientists from the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers for their work to improve understanding of ocean cycles, marine resources, and fisheries.