

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE CALIFORNIA CURRENT ECOSYSTEM REPORT

The Habitat Committee (HC) heard a presentation by Drs. Chris Harvey and Toby Garfield on the California Current Ecosystem Report. The HC believes the annual report continues to evolve and improve, providing easy-to-read graphical and written summaries of important ecosystem indicators. We appreciate the addition of freshwater indices of flow by ecoregion for river basins across the California Current, as the HC had previously requested. We also appreciate the regional summaries for several indicators, reflecting the spatial and temporal variation in those indices.

We would like to offer some comments on elements that could be included in future reports. First, we would like to see some discussion of what these indicators mean for management of each of the fishery management plans. For example, based on the recent indicators, does the Ecosystem Work Group (EWG) recommend additional precaution for management of salmon or other Council-managed species? Some attempt to connect the indicators to advice on management actions is a necessary step toward implementing ecosystem-based fishery management. Second, we appreciate the life-cycle conceptual model that summarizes freshwater and marine indicators for Sacramento River fall Chinook salmon and suggest that similar conceptual models and summaries be produced for other salmon stocks that strongly influence Council management actions (e.g., Klamath and Columbia River stocks). Third, given that Columbia River salmon stocks are a major contributor to Council-managed salmon fisheries, and that spill at hydropower dams is an important factor that influences life-cycle survival, an additional indicator that summarizes spill proportions at the Columbia and Snake River dams would be useful to include in future reports. There are also long-term (1998-present) monitoring data on freshwater survival rates for several Columbia Basin salmon stocks that could be included as a measure of freshwater habitat conditions and their effects on survival during juvenile life stages.

PFMC
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