

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON REVIEW OF FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVES

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the candidate ecosystem plan initiatives listed in Agenda Item F.3, Attachment 1, along with the comments on each initiative made by the Ecosystem Workgroup (Agenda Item F.3.a, EWG Report).

All of the initiatives are feasible and useful, but unlike the first two initiatives (Protection for Unfished Forage Fish and Review of Ecosystem Indicators), most of the remaining initiatives will be long-term projects. Appropriate resources need to be dedicated to the chosen initiatives to ensure adequate progress is made. The SSC notes that the choice of initiatives is a policy decision. However, most of the initiatives involve scientific considerations. The SSC should be involved throughout the implementation of the initiatives, particularly during the planning stages.

The SSC has the following comments on the initiatives:

- Initiative A2.1 (Potential Long-Term Effects of Council Harvest Policies on Age- and Size-Distribution in Managed Stocks) has the advantage that much of the data and models are already available or are in development.
- If initiative A2.6 (Human Recruitment to the Fisheries Initiative) or A2.7 (Cross-Fishery Management Plan Socio-Economic Effects of Fisheries Management Initiative) are selected, account should be taken of work already being conducted by staff at the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers, which should be completed in the next two to three years. In addition, for initiative A2.6, the suggested analysis of available demographic data on participants in Council-managed fisheries would be facilitated by data collected by states on fishing crew (e.g., crew and commercial fishing license applications). This will require cooperation with the states, which the SSC encourages.
- There is new science (NOAA Climate Plan; Western Regional Action Plan) as well as ongoing research such as the climate vulnerability analysis for West Coast marine fish that should be taken into account if initiative A2.8 (Cross-Fishery Management Plan Effects of Climate Shifts) is selected. The SSC expects that climate change will lead to changes in stock productivity and a consequent need to revise reference points. This initiative should therefore explore the impact of changing climate on harvest policy choices, including how reference points are calculated.

Many of the initiatives (such as A2.1 and A2.8) will require involvement of scientific staff who are already committed to conducting analyses to support Council decision-making. Care should be taken to ensure that implementing the new initiatives will not lead to a loss of the basic information on which management is based, such as stock assessments.