

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP REPORT ON THE RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS DOCUMENT

The Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) reviewed the September 2018 draft Research and Data Needs Document for whether the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) had addressed the EWG's June comments on the earlier draft of the document, per the Council's June 2018 direction. The EWG also discussed whether the length and level of detail in the Research and Data Needs Document serves the document's intended purpose. The latter question was a big focus of the Council's June discussion of the document, with the time needed to improve the document by narrowing in on fewer priorities being the major downside to making those improvements.

The current draft of the Research and Data Needs Document is long and thorough, reflecting the Council's varied interests and the intellectual curiosity of the many scientists that support the Council's work. We commend the SSC for taking a detailed look at the many research priorities under the Council's different major areas of work. However, we wonder if the document has become so long and detailed that, although it addresses research and data needs, it does not truly prioritize those needs in a meaningful way.

If the Council decides to finalize this document at this meeting, we suggest that the Council and SSC plan the 2023 review process revisit the document's intended scope and purpose to ensure that rigorous prioritization occurs to provide a lean document. Alternatively, the EWG notes that the Council could refrain from finalizing the document at this meeting, so that it can send the State of Oregon's streamlined draft document out for public review. We recognize that Oregon's draft document may reflect Oregon's particular perspective, but it serves as a reasonable starting place for discussions about prioritizing work. The EWG thinks that it would be useful and appropriate for the Council to extend its current review process if doing so will ultimately achieve a truly prioritized set of research and data needs.

Finally, we note that two of the EWG's June recommendations were not addressed in the September draft Research and Data Needs Document. We include these again here in case the Council decides to adopt this September 2018 version:

- In section 2.5.1, High Benefit, there is a bullet that reads, "Investigate the potential for emerging technologies such as environmental DNA (eDNA) to complement and augment existing ocean monitoring. Focus in particular on the value of eDNA for difficult to sample species." It is not clear how the work envisioned under this bullet is intended to be useful to the Council process. What type of ocean monitoring is being augmented here and why is eDNA particularly cited as being potentially useful to augmenting that monitoring?
- In section 2.5.2, Moderate Benefit, there is a bullet that reads, "Develop an approach for interpreting the values for indicators, including the development of thresholds, where appropriate." This recommendation is vaguely worded and confusing. Does it refer to all of the indicators used in the Council process? If not, then which? What is meant by "an approach for interpreting" values and how does it link to the Council's research or data needs?