HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Habitat Committee (HC) reviewed the Climate and Communities Core Team (CCCT) report on the Climate and Communities Initiative and offers the following comments for Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) consideration regarding guidance and development of related future activities and initiatives.

These comments correspond to the CCCT recommendations presented in a numbered outline format in the CCCT Report 1, beginning on page 3. The order below reflects the order the topics are presented in the CCCT report, not the relative importance of any topic to the HC.

1. Item 2.a.: The Council could task advisory bodies to explore activities to increase flexibility, responsiveness, and adaptability within ongoing Council processes [paraphrased].
    1. The HC acknowledges the opportunity to improve timeliness and effectiveness of comments on actions that may impact habitat and fisheries. For example, the Council could set guidelines for the HC and the Marine Planning Committee (MPC) to prioritize and divide workload for drafting comment letters on behalf of the Council. Prioritizing and spreading the workload may enable comments to be in a more actionable level of detail.
    2. If the Council wants to initiate work on item 2.a., the HC recommends the Council consider how to better coordinate and prioritize comments, as well as new approaches to creating flexibility in the Council process that would better support the Council in providing meaningful comment on public notices with timelines that do not align with Council meetings.

2. Item 3.b.: The Council could ask that NOAA Fisheries to provide a report on how the government is coordinating hatchery, habitat, and hydropower policies to buffer salmon stocks against the effects of climate change, in the spirit of collaboration with other agencies, stakeholders, and co-managers.
    1. The HC acknowledges a need for continued and accelerated collaboration with regards to buffering Pacific salmon stocks from the effects of climate change. Directly managing salmon fisheries is far downstream, so to speak, to a host of climate-based and local anthropogenic impacts in freshwater and estuary habitats, and coordination across management silos is crucial (Munsch et al. 2020).

Regarding Candidate Initiatives for future consideration, the HC suggests that this topic could potentially be developed into a broader initiative addressing adaptive manage-based responses to variable climate and habitat impacts (e.g., improving ecosystem and habitat-based indicators for specific salmon stocks (Harvey et al. 2021), incorporating climate and habitat indicators into harvest management (e.g., Oregon coho harvest control rule), determining optimal hatchery release strategies, and addressing habitat impacts through Council engagement with agency partners).

References from above

Harvey, C., Garfield, et al. 2021. Ecosystem Status Report of the California Current for 2020-21: A Summary of Ecosystem Indicators Compiled by the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Team (CCIEA).

Munsch, S.H., Greene, C.M., Johnson, R.C., Satterthwaite, W.H., Imaki, H., Brandes, P.L. and O'Farrell, M.R., 2020. Science for integrative management of a diadromous fish stock: interdependencies of fisheries, flow, and habitat restoration. Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, 77(9), pp.1487-1504.

PFMC
09/11/21