

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the report on the outcome of the Fisheries Ecosystem Plan Climate and Community Initiative presented in the summary report ([Agenda Item H.2.a, CCCT Report 1, September 2021](#)) and offers the following observations and recommendations.

The SSC acknowledges that this report is not conclusive or prescriptive on actions to take to address the impacts of climate change on fisheries and fishing communities. However, the report provides a number of useful recommendations. The SSC has the following recommendations that relate to incorporation of climate considerations into science supporting fishery management:

- 1, a, i. The SSC agrees with the proposal to incorporate climate variability into Council assessments, and notes that this recommendation is already incorporated in Chapter 5 of the revised Fisheries Ecosystem Plan. However, the SSC acknowledges that there are challenges, for example in incorporating climate considerations into the current fisheries forecast models, due to the time scales they target. New and better regional oceanographic models that can forecast 12 years would be needed to be consistent with stock assessment forecasts.
- 1, a, ii. The SSC notes that the Council has its own prioritization schedule for stock assessments, which may be inconsistent with prioritization based on climate vulnerability assessments. There is a need to develop a path to incorporate NOAA's climate vulnerability assessments into the Management Strategy Evaluations used by the Council.
- 1, a, iii. The SSC agrees that there is a need to improve communication between the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) team, management teams, and advisory bodies. For example, although salmon forecasts and ecosystem status reports come out at the same time, there is no clear process for exchanging or incorporating ecosystem information into the forecasts. In most other cases, assessments and projections reach the Council at a different meeting than the IEA report.
- 2, a, ii, 3. The SSC agrees that there is a need to incorporate climate information summarized in the IEA report into management and not only increase the number of indicators included in the IEA report. The SSC acknowledges there are different ways to incorporate climate variability into management, for example in stock assessments and harvest control rules, but there is a need for concrete paths to do so. In addition, the SSC sees the necessity to identify areas where research is still needed, in particular on the state of the art on how climate information is included in harvest control rules and stock assessments in other systems, and how best practices can be incorporated in the Council management process.

The SSC is willing to work with other Council advisory bodies to accomplish the recommendations in this report. The SSC also notes that the need for clear paths to incorporate climate information into management is the topic of the upcoming meeting of the Council Coordinating Committee's Scientific Coordination Subcommittee to be held next August in Sitka, Alaska.