

ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE  
WESTERN REGIONAL ACTION PLAN

The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) reviewed the Western Regional Action Plan (WRAP; Agenda Item H.2) to implement the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Fisheries Climate Science Strategy in 2022 - 2024 as well as additional supplemental material provided by the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) and public comments provided by The Nature Conservancy and Ocean Conservancy under this agenda item. The EAS is broadly supportive of the WRAP and its intentions and commends NMFS for opening it for public comment. The EAS identified improvements that could be made to increase the benefits of the Plan. Overall, the EAS supports the report of the Ecosystem Workgroup EWG (Agenda Item H.2.b, Supplemental EWG Report 1) and agrees with their comments and recommendations. The EAS identified the following additional concerns and comments for the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) consideration:

- Most importantly, the EAS encourages the Council to take advantage of the additional opportunity to provide comments to NMFS on how to improve the WRAP.
- It was clear through public comments and EAS discussions that funding and resources were limited for the Science Centers and NMFS to produce the WRAP. The important question that came to mind is, what level of work could be included and described in more detail, if the Science Centers and NMFS had more funding to support the WRAP, the NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy as well as the Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative (CEFI). Specifically, what would the Science Centers do to prepare the foundation to implement the CEFI? What are the kinds of information that could be available to support Council decision-making? Similarly, what work and priorities would remain if NMFS did not secure those appropriations?
- Given that the time horizon for this WRAP extends only to 2024, what are the considerations and implications for the WRAP beyond this timeline including staffing, funding, resources, and priorities?
- We recognize the initial intention of the WRAP may have been for its use as an internal coordination document but also acknowledge that it has a potentially important role to play as an external facing document as well. We suggest NMFS considers how this document can be crafted and utilized as a public informational document, especially if it can help gather the capacity and assemble the resources needed to carry on the work.
- The EAS is in support of the EWG recommendation for the “WRAP to explicitly include the needed to support what is now characterized as potential Initiative 2.2 (Science Policy and Planning for Understanding the Effects of Oceanographic Conditions and Recruitment on Council-Managed Finfish Species) in the September 2022 draft Fisheries Ecosystem Plan.”

- The EAS also notes that there are significant opportunities to work with the fishing fleets to get on-scene information that could help inform or guide these forward-looking initiatives and recommends NMFS explore how best to make use of this valuable source of data and insight.

Overall, the EAS commends the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers and West Coast Regional Office work accomplished and proposed in the WRAP while creating opportunities for contribution and collective action through public comment. We see significant value in these summary assessments for aligning and coordinating science, policy, and management efforts for understanding and adapting to changing climate and oceans.

PFMC  
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