

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON CALIFORNIA CURRENT ECOSYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) met with representatives of the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (CCIEA) team, Drs. Andrew Leising (Southwest Fisheries Science Center) and Chris Harvey (Northwest Fisheries Science Center, NWFSC). The SSC's discussion with the CCIEA team encompassed three topics, which are reported upon below in turn: 1) the 2022-2023 California Current Ecosystem Status Report ([Agenda Item H.1.a, CCIEA Team Report 1](#)), 2) the report of the 2022 SSC Ecosystem-based Management Subcommittee (SSCES) meeting ([Agenda Item H.1.a, SSC-ES Report 1](#)), and 3) discussion of ecosystem science review topics for 2023 ([Agenda Item H.1.a, CCIEA Team Report 2](#)).

Review of the 2022-2023 CCIEA Ecosystem Status Report (ESR)

The Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) provides important information on environmental, biological, social, and economic indicators and provides an ecosystem perspective on West Coast fish stocks, fisheries, and coastal communities for the Council process. The SSC commends the CCIEA team's openness and responsiveness to Council and SSC questions and recommendations, and their continuing efforts to improve the Status Report each year. Significant additions to the report this year include an expanded discussion of potential interactions between fisheries and wind energy, indices of the abundance of juvenile groundfish from the NMFS bottom trawl survey, expanded information about coastal pelagic abundance and distribution, a streamlined salmon indicator section, and additions to the climate change appendix (see Appendix C for a full list of changes to the ESR). The SSC appreciates the ESR's narrative style to describe oceanographic and ecological conditions in 2022 and the breadth of the supplemental information presented in the many appendices and in the CCIEA data portal (<https://www.integratedecosystemassessment.noaa.gov/regions/california-current/california-current-ia-indicators>). The SSC supports the shift to more automated report generation and the use of Open Science principles for the ESR, and hopes the CCIEA team can find more ways to reduce their workload.

SSC Ecosystem-based Management Subcommittee (SSCES) Report from 2022

The SSC reviewed the SSCES report ([Agenda Item H.1.a, SSC-ES Report 1](#)) from its meeting held via webinar in September 2022 and discussed the report with SSCES Chair Dr. Kristin Marshall (NWFSC). The SSCES reviewed the portfolio of salmon indicators used in the ESR and discussed additions and changes to the climate change appendix. For salmon indicators, the SSC agrees with the SSCES recommendations to more strongly link ecosystem indicators to existing salmon life cycle models, develop best practices for spotlight tables, and continue exploring using ecosystem indicators for near-term salmon outlooks. For the climate change appendix, the SSC supports an increased focus on characterizing and communicating uncertainty in climate projections, improving clarity in terminology discussing forecasts of biological and ecological indices, and improving indicators of resilience for fisheries and fishing communities. The SSC appreciates the progress the CCIEA team has already made toward implementing these recommendations in the 2023 report (see Appendix C).

Proposed Ecosystem Science Review Topics for 2023

The CCIEA team has proposed no topics for review by the SSC in September 2023. The CCIEA team would instead apply the time and effort toward making improvements to the ESR previously identified in concert with the SSC, and assisting with Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative 4. The SSC supports the CCIEA team's proposal to forgo the SSCES review for 2023 and suggests that the SSCES consult with the CCIEA team to continue implementing suggestions from the SSC and other advisory bodies to improve the ESR. Additionally, the SSC supports using the SSCES time in September to review methods and materials for implementing FEP Initiative 4 or other ecosystem-related topics.

PFMC

03/06/23