

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE
FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVE WORKPLAN

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) attended the Ecosystem Workgroup’s (EWG) meeting on the ecosystem and climate information initiative. We thank the EWG for its excellent work, and we support its near- and long-term scope and timeline for completing this initiative. We have the following general comments.

First, we agree with the EWG (pg. 4 of [Agenda Item H.2.a, EWG Report 1](#)) that it could work with California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment team scientists, management teams and advisory bodies to assess where short-term forecasts of ocean conditions and species distributions might support the setting of pre-season and in-season management measures. As we mentioned in our September 2022 report ([Agenda Item H.1.a, Supplemental CPSAS Report 1](#)), the management framework for the central subpopulation of northern anchovy allows the Council to consider any relevant factors when setting annual catch limits, including ecosystem indicators and trends in survey indices.

Second, we note the CPS Terms of Reference for stock assessments repeatedly mentions ecosystem considerations¹ and how they could be used in benchmark and update assessments. These include, in background information, in data preparations, as data inputs, and in decisions about model structure. These new data and methods could be incorporated during the stock assessment prioritization process and during stock assessment activities such as stock assessment review panels.

We have the following specific responses to EWG requests to advisory bodies and management teams.

First, the EWG requested feedback on prioritizing and grouping fishery management plan (FMP) species for future ecosystem and climate information reports. For the five Council-managed, commercially fished species in the CPS FMP, we recommend a thorough literature review, as well as a review of acoustic trawl survey results. Such review may identify two or more species as responding in more similar ways than others, to environmental drivers.

In regard to the EWG noting (on pg. 6) ecological role as a possible key criteria for the Council in prioritizing species and groups of species, we recommend CPS dynamics be accounted for as part of a broad prey base for larger fish, and for seabirds and marine mammals. As we noted in our [September 2022](#) report on this developing initiative, CPS species are short-lived and respond relatively quickly to climate-driven environmental change, which may in turn may affect predator species. Therefore, CPS dynamics should be integrated into risk tables for species that feed on

¹ “These may include variability in the physical environment, habitat, competitors, prey, or predators that directly or indirectly affects the stock’s status, vital rates (growth, survival, productivity/recruitment) or range and distribution. Note which, if any, ecosystem factors are used in the assessment and how (e.g., as background information, in data preparations, as data inputs, in decisions about model structure).”

CPS along with other prey species, and separately, into the Council's prioritization of species and species groups for this initiative.

Second, the EWG requested feedback on preferred times in FMP-specific management processes when it would be most useful to receive ecosystem and climate information to support harvest-setting, or pre-season or in-season management processes. We support the EWGs interest (pg. 4) in using ecosystem and climate information for CPS season development. The most useful times to receive this information are April and May for annual (sardine) and biannual (Pacific mackerel, central subpopulation of northern anchovy) setting of harvest specifications and incidental catch limits. The current timing of the ecosystem status report (i.e., at the March meeting) would likely meet the needs of the CPS fisheries.

Finally, the ongoing work of the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center to identify a southern subpopulation of Pacific sardines in U.S. waters may lead to additional management measures to address that subpopulation in the future. We ask that the Council remain open to future revision of the timing of inclusion of ecosystem and climate information should management of that subpopulation be adopted and a need for revision arise.

PFMC
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