

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON THE FISHERY
ECOSYSTEM PLAN INITIATIVE WORKPLAN

The Ecosystem Working Group (EWG) discussed the Climate and Ecosystem Information Initiative (Initiative 4) during our March 6, 2023, meeting and had productive briefings with members of the Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel and Salmon Advisory Subpanel on our H.2 Initiative proposal and the proposed time-frame. The EWG proposes meeting virtually on May 15 and 17 with participants from Science Centers, management teams, and advisory bodies (ABs) with expertise relevant to potential pilot species for Initiative 4. The objectives for this two-part meeting are:

- Discuss management process timing for inclusion of climate and ecosystem information (including but not limited to a risk classification table), key uncertainties and gaps in the assessments of single or multiple species, and conceptual models of physical and biological indicators influencing pilot species population dynamics.
- Review the North Pacific Fishery Management Council Risk Classification Table (Table 1 in EWG Report 1) for assessment, population dynamics, and environmental/ecosystem considerations and discuss modifications needed to create a similar table for the Pacific Council.
- Discuss the framework to identify and prioritize the Council-managed species groups or species with management processes that should next be supported with ecosystem and climate information.

Based on initial feedback from ABs, it appears that there is strong interest in considering multiple species during the first phase of the initiative. It is important to emphasize that the main objective of this initial work is to elucidate mechanisms to better integrate ecosystem considerations into the management process, rather than to apply the techniques to any one particular species. We are not opposed to adding new species to this initial round of pilot species, but we note that doing so risks extending the timeline for development of an agreed upon approach and implementation of a draft evaluation for each of the pilot species. We believe that the May EWG meeting would allow engagement, discussion, and prioritization to identify whether any additional species could proceed as pilots under a September timeline. It would be up to the Science Center analysts to decide what they are able to take on for this first pilot phase.

However, the EWG also became aware at this March 2023 meeting of the unique conditions of the potentially large incoming sablefish recruitment class highlighted by the Ecosystem Status Report under Agenda Item H.1.a, and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center under Agenda Item F.1., alongside the offer by Dr. Jim Hastie to conduct an extra update assessment this cycle. Like petrale sole, sablefish is information-rich and if this species were selected by Council for consideration under this Initiative it could be added to the pilot approach and follow the same timelines, including discussion at the proposed May EWG meetings, development of a pilot evaluation prior to September, and review by the Scientific and Statistical Committee's Ecosystem and Groundfish Subcommittees in September 2023.