

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON ECOSYSTEM
WORKGROUP REPORT ON THE ECOSYSTEM AND CLIMATE INFORMATION
INITIATIVE

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Ecosystem Workgroup's (EWG) report. Our responses to the EWG's specific requests are as follows.

Section 2, species selection process and Section 3, Fishery Management Plan (FMP)-specific timelines and on-ramps for ecosystem and climate information use in the harvest-setting processes for CPS, groundfish, and salmon. The species selection process in Section 2 looks sound including the schedule for public review in the coming months and final adoption in March 2024. Section 3, Figure 2, showing FMP-specific entry points for information, is a good start on a complex FMP with different management schedules for different species. Figure 2 needs the inclusion of Central Subpopulation of Northern Anchovy according to the schedule in Council Operating Procedure 9. We also note we have questions about how the risk tables would complement or improve opportunities for introducing ecosystem information to the harvest specifications process for CPS that may already exist in CPS specifications. We wish to ensure existing FMP specifications processes and the proposed risk tables are properly reconciled and avoid duplication in the use of ecosystem and climate information. In sum, CPSAS is ready to work with the CPS Management Team and EWG after the September Council meeting to discuss FMP specific timelines and on ramps for ecosystem and climate-specific information and the appropriate incorporation of uncertainty and risk into the existing harvest setting processes for CPS.

Appendix A, selection criteria for choosing species/stocks/groups to receive ecosystem and climate information. We support Appendix A and appreciate the inclusion of Ecological Considerations as a key criteria for the Council in prioritizing species and groups of species, as we requested in our two prior reports on this initiative.

Appendix B, selection criteria applied to seven species. We recommend the EWG and Council consider if and how climate-driven range shifts should be added to the list of Ecological as well as Social and Economic Considerations criteria.

For Ecological Considerations, the Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA; McClure et al 2023) cited in EWG Report 1 found CPS is one of the two species groups, along with Highly Migratory Species, most likely to change distribution in response to climate change. Many seabird and marine mammal species are central place foragers tied to the Channel Islands and Farallon Islands in breeding season. We expect CPS range shifts in response to changed ocean temperature and productivity to affect the productivity and population trajectory of these predators.

For Social and Economic considerations, we note the sardine live bait fishery is centered in southern California and the major CPS ports and processing operations are in southern and central California. The dramatic range shifts for CPS predicted in the 2023 CVA referenced in the EWG Report 1 will impact fishers and dependent economies. This is an example where fisher and industry knowledge should be more explicitly integrated into this initiative to identify areas of risk and flexibility to better preserve the wellbeing of ecological and socioeconomic values and endpoints.

PFMC
09/08/23