

## SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON CALIFORNIA CURRENT ECOSYSTEM STATUS REPORT

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) met with representatives of the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (CCIEA) team, Andrew Leising (Southwest Fisheries Science Center) and Mary Hunsicker (Northwest Fisheries Science Center). The SSC's discussion with the CCIEA team covered three documents: 1) the 2023-2024 California Current Ecosystem Status Report ([Agenda Item H.1.a, CCIEA Team Report 1](#)), 2) Appendix E. Developing Indicators of climate change and variability ([H.1.a, Supplemental CCIEA Team Report 2](#)), and 3) Potential topics for SSC-Ecosystem-Based Subcommittee (SSC-ES) / CCIEA in September 2024 ([Agenda Item H.1.a, Supplemental CCIEA Team Report 3](#)).

### **Review of the 2023-2024 CCIEA Ecosystem Status Report and Appendix E**

The Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) provides important information on environmental, biological, social, and economic indicators and on an ecosystem perspective on U.S. West Coast fish stocks, fisheries, and coastal communities for the Pacific Fishery Management Council (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 ESR each year. Notable additions to the report this year include expanded information on forage species in the California Current Ecosystem (CCE), refinements to salmon stoplight tables and suite of indicators, expanded analyses and figures on the human well-being components, and the addition of new topics to the Climate Change Appendix (see Appendix C of [Agenda Item H.1.a, CCIEA Team Report 1](#) for a full list of changes).

The SSC appreciates the progress towards incorporating estimates of uncertainty into the ESR. The SSC recommends that uncertainty and/or sample sizes continue to be added where possible. The SSC also recommends that a discussion of uncertainty using Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) language be incorporated into Table E.1 on the potential impacts of the 2024 El Niño. The SSC highlights that care is needed in the treatment and discussion of uncertainty when mixing observations of historical conditions with forecasts and projections of future conditions.

The SSC discussed the importance of the timing of the ESR agenda item, with respect to Council decisions, that may benefit from information in the Report. In particular, salmon stoplight tables could better inform Council discussions around pre-season forecasts, but the Council does not schedule the ESR agenda item until after the salmon forecast agenda item. More generally, the

SSC recommends considering further coordination between the Council and CCIEA team to ensure that the delivery of the ESR is well-timed to support decision-making.

### **Review of Potential topics for SSC-ES / CCIEA in Summer 2024**

The CCIEA team proposed three topics for review by the SSC in Summer 2024: 1) new prey indicators in the ESR; 2) best practices for salmon stoplight tables; and 3) development of risk tables and their applications in support of Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiative 4, which was suggested based on prior SSC-ES feedback. The SSC identified topics 1 and 3 as priorities for the summer 2024 meeting. The SSC recommends revisiting the potential scope of topic 3 after the March 2024 Council meeting, which could be inclusive of topic 2 if the risk table approach was expanded beyond groundfish. The SSC identified offshore wind energy as an additional topic that could be considered during 2024 or a future review. The SSC-ES proposes to hold this review meeting in the summer of 2024 in time to submit the report from the review to the briefing book for the September Council meeting.

PFMC

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