

ECOSYSTEM ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FISHERY ECOSYSTEM PLAN  
INITIATIVE 4 – GROUND FISH AND SALMON RISK TABLES - PROGRESS REVIEW

The Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel (EAS) held an online meeting on September 5 to review progress on the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Initiative 4. The EAS received a presentation from the California Current Ecosystem Assessment (CCIEA) Team on FEP Initiative 4, and reviewed the CCIEA Risk Table Report on FEP Initiative 4 ([Agenda Item H.1.a, CCIEA Team Report 1, September 2024](#)) and the Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) Report ([Agenda Item H.1.a, EWG Report 1, September 2024](#)) and has the following comments.

The EAS supports incorporating the risk table approach, specifically the Climate and Ecosystem Adaptive Scientific Uncertainty Buffers (CEASUB), to specify scientific uncertainty in the setting of groundfish specifications. This approach provides the Scientific and Statistical Committee with the ability to incorporate positive, neutral, and negative adjustments to sigma by considering a wider set of criteria to select sigma when the assessment is adopted. This achieves one of the main purposes of Initiative 4: to develop clear pathways for ecosystem and climate information to be used in the setting of scientific uncertainty, harvest policy, and specific management actions.

The EAS supports using the risk table approach to evaluate sigma in the 2025 groundfish assessment cycle. Specifically, the EAS supports the EWG recommendation “to update the risk table for sablefish, plus one to two new risk tables for benchmarks or updates to stock assessments being conducted in 2025.”

The EAS supports the continued collaborative work between the CCIEA team, stock assessment scientists, and management teams to determine the optimal pathway for incorporating climate and ecosystem information into harvest settings for other fishery management plan (FMP) species.

In summary, the EAS supports:

1. The commitment of the CCIEA team and the EWG to move forward with the development of risk tables for Sacramento River and Klamath River Chinook salmon in the fall of 2024 to evaluate whether the risk table pathway compliments salmon management.
2. The continued development of pathways to include climate and ecosystem information in the harvest setting for coastal pelagic species (CPS), considering the life history of CPS differs from groundfish and may impact the ability to withstand episodic events.
3. Exploring how climate and ecosystem information can predict the occurrence, distribution, and interaction with bycatch and trust resources and how this information can help achieve the goals of the proposed Inflation Reduction Act Project 3.

Risk tables scratch the surface of how we can include ecosystem and climate information in decision-making and use the information to build climate resilient fisheries. In addition to the current effort, we support efforts toward diversifying the pathways for information to enter the FMP processes—not just for harvest setting and not just for data rich stocks.