

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
2024-25 CALIFORNIA CURRENT ECOSYSTEM STATUS REPORT AND  
2025 SCIENCE REVIEW TOPICS

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 topics: 1) the 2024-2025 California Current Ecosystem Status Report ([Agenda Item F.1.a CCIEA Report 1](#)) and 2) the Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) topics for SSC review in 2025 ([Agenda Item F.1.a Supplemental CCIEA Team Report 4](#)), 3) the SSC Ecosystem-based Management Subcommittee (SSCES) [report](#) on their November 5, 2024 meeting.

**Review of the 2024-2025 CCIEA Ecosystem Status Report (ESR)**

The ESR includes important information on environmental, biological, social, and economic indicators and provides an ecosystem perspective on U.S. West Coast fish stocks, fisheries, and coastal communities for the Council process. The SSC commends the CCIEA team's work in producing another excellent and useful report and presentation for the Council and appreciates their ongoing efforts to improve the report. The SSC raised no major issues with the report or presentation but made a small number of suggestions (included in SSC notes) to improve clarity of findings, particularly with regard to interpreting uncertainty and whether changes in indicators or trends were statistically significant.

**SSC Ecosystem-based Management Subcommittee (SSCES) Report from November 2024**

The SSC reviewed the SSCES report from its meeting held via webinar on November 5, 2024, and discussed the report with SSCES Chair Tommy Moore (Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission). The SSCES reviewed two topics in November: a.) a coastwide index of abundance for krill and b.) a Dungeness crab megalopae index. Kristin Marshall (Northwest Fisheries Science Center) chaired the meeting. The SSC agrees with the SSCES and supports using the krill indicator in the Ecosystem Status Report and encourages further development of both the indicator and potential connections to other ecosystem components. The SSC concurs with the SSCES that there is potential for this indicator to be helpful in advancing our understanding of krill and other ecosystem components connected to krill, and it recommends that a more comprehensive review of the strengths and weaknesses of various krill indicators be considered in the future. The SSC concurs with the SSCES support for the inclusion of the megalopae index in future ESRs as an indicator of forage availability but notes that more work is needed to evaluate the role of megalopae as forage and how well the megalopae index represents forage availability. It was noted that density-dependent mortality of megalopae after settlement may moderate the impact of high settlement rates on subsequent forage availability.

**Review of Potential topics for SSCES / CCIEA in Summer 2025**

The CCIEA team proposed two topics for review by the SSCES summer or fall of 2025: 1) incorporation of new data types (and indices) from glider surveys along the U.S. west coast, and

2) recent efforts to modernize and streamline the ESR by moving certain methodological components to an appendix and online “living” document. The SSC is supportive of reviewing the first topic, provided that the CCIEA team provides concrete examples of new data types and their potential uses that the SSCES can review. If examples are not available, a workshop rather than an SSCES review might be more appropriate for identifying and developing new indices using these new data types. The SSC finds the second topic to be a valuable effort, but less appropriate for review specifically by the SSCES. The EWG and the Council itself would be better placed to comment on the editorial design of the ESR and whether to include technical methods in the report or in a separate appendix. In lieu of the second topic, the CCIEA team suggested that the SSCES consider a review of short reports on ESR indicators tailored to specific stocks to support the development of risk tables and updates to existing risk tables. The focus of the review would be on indicators supporting the ecosystem and environmental considerations column of the risk tables. The SSC is supportive of this, provided that the review is focused on technical aspects of the topic within the scope of the CCIEA and avoids broader issues regarding the use of risk tables in management. Around two hours would be needed for each topic, so the review could likely be held as a half-day webinar or with a half-day meeting prior to the September SSC meeting.

PFMC  
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