

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
CURRENT CALIFORNIA ECOSYSTEM REPORT

The draft version of the first annual State of the California Current Ecosystem Report (Agenda Item K.3.a. Supplemental Attachment 1) offers several metrics and trends of ecosystem functioning borrowed from the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) report. These measures attempt to offer a composite picture of the ecosystem for management consideration. The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) did not discuss in detail whether these metrics are appropriate ecosystem indicators. In general we think that these provide some yardsticks by which aspects of the ecosystem are measured to help the Council understand how those metrics are changing, and in some cases, in response to impacts managed by this body. The GMT discussed additional potential indicators that might provide a more complete description of the state of the ecosystem. However, the GMT did not develop a complete list here, but may do so as part of the planned workshop described by the authors of this report.

One notable attribute of many of these measures is the attempt to demonstrate how they change over time. Given the need to track cumulative effects on the ecosystem (e.g. by the National Environmental Policy Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Act), the GMT supports these approaches to designate how these metrics change over a specific time. Both trend in change and the magnitude of the change are reported, two dimensions important in characterizing cumulative effects. While we understand that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) is contemplating work to establish criteria to measure relative health from some of these indices, we suggest that the Council can still use such a report to gauge whether significant changes are occurring even in the absence of status criteria. As we recommended it in Agenda Item I.2.b, Supplemental GMT Report, it is an area for further consideration in the examination of how to improve the groundfish process.

PFMC
11/06/12