

ECOSYSTEM WORKGROUP SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON FUTURE  
COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Ecosystem Workgroup (EWG) discussed the Year-at-a-Glance (YAG; Agenda Item J.4, Attachment 1). During the September 2024 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, the Council tasked the EWG with drafting a summary report describing the Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Initiative 4 process, results, and anticipated next steps (September 2024 motions-in-writing). There was no Initiative 4 check-in during the March 2025 meeting, and it was the EWG's understanding that this will occur in September 2025. The EWG asks that an FEP Initiative 4 agenda item be added to the September Council meeting agenda. Given that the groundfish risk tables developed in parallel with the benchmark stock assessments will be first presented to the Council at the September meeting, we are not sure that the results and next steps will be clear by the time the EWG adjourns in September.

The EWG appreciates the robust discussion that the Council had regarding the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (CCIEA) Ecosystem Status Report (ESR) review topics. The Scientific and Statistical Committee's Ecosystem Subcommittee (SSC-ES) review of CCIEA science topics, as detailed in the FEP (Chapters 2.3 and 5), is one of the Council's biggest outcomes for a small annual investment because it ensures the entire enterprise moves forward and remains focused on how ecosystem and social data can be used in management. In recent years, the SSC-ES review has occurred via webinar following the September Council meeting, in acknowledgment of the already challenging workload of the SSC in September.

The SSC's review helps to keep the ESR within a frame of scientific information and analyses that are useful to the Council. Before the ESR science review process was established, there was a lot of confusion, frustration, and time-wasted over what information might or might not be useful. The SSC-ES/SSC review process makes the ESR more relevant to the Council's interests and decision making than peer-reviewed publications would on their own, makes for an overall more organized and succinct ESR, helps us prioritize scientific work in the background, and makes for a smoother and less confusing ESR presentation to the Council.

In Agenda Item F.1, Supplemental EWG Report 1, the EWG highlighted the need to review how the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) is used in management because it has become less correlated to local oceanographic conditions in the California Current Ecosystem in recent years, and had suggested it could be a topic for the ESR review. We believe this item may have been inadvertently missed during the discussion for that agenda item and ask that it be considered.