

Topic Workshop on “Research priorities for understanding the population dynamics of small pelagic fish in the North Pacific”

Conveners:

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Description:

Small pelagic fish (SPF) are critical components of marine ecosystems in the North Pacific and in various systems worldwide. These fish are the target of major commercial fisheries that provide necessary diets for the world’s rapidly expanding aquaculture operations. SPF are also vital to the diets of higher predators, playing a role in the transfer of energy and organic matter from zooplankton to higher predators. However, another common characteristic of SPF populations is their high degree of temporal variability, with biomasses that can fluctuate by several orders of magnitude at decadal or multi-decadal timescales. These fluctuations have been attributed to changes in climate and ocean properties, shifts in distribution or migration behavior, various ways of interspecific interactions, and variable sensitivity to commercial harvesting. The need for a forum to synthesize new findings and coordinate multidisciplinary research efforts is the motivation for a new joint ICES/PICES Working Group on SPF. In this workshop, we intend to discuss and prioritize research questions concerning the dynamics of SPF populations in the North Pacific. Participants will be encouraged to highlight key gaps in our understanding and suggest actionable research activities that can be shared with the broader PICES, ICES, and other international communities.