

Comparative marine ecosystem structure and function: Descriptors and characteristics (D)

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This session will contribute some fundamental aspects of an ecosystem approach to management.

The ecosystem approach to management requires a basic understanding of important processes controlling marine ecosystems and their productivity. A necessary first step toward understanding ecosystems is appreciating the fundamental features of ecosystem structure and function. This session will focus on descriptions of diverse marine ecosystems of the ICES and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) realms (i.e. pan-Atlantic and Pacific basin regions), paying particular attention to common features, unique features, fundamental features, and important drivers.

This session will emphasize a comparative approach to identify driving and controlling processes in large marine ecosystems. The descriptors will span a wide range of biophysical and trophodynamic features, including Background & Setting, Geography, Climate, Hydrography, Nutrients, Primary Producers, Zooplankton, Benthos, Fish, Seabirds, Marine Mammals, Management Systems, Major Issues facing the System, and Critical Factors that cause ecosystem change.

The benefit of the comparative analyses presented during this session will create the opportunity to take a broader ecosystem perspective and allow generalizations to be drawn, generalizations that are important to a successful ecosystem approach to management. The theme session will provide an opportunity to emphasize the major similarities and differences between different regional marine ecosystems and to highlight these to the ICES community.

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