

Theme Session J

Climate change: Back to the future for marine predators

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The ICES Science Plan has an emphasis on defining medium to longer term research themes relating to ecosystems. An important thematic area is to understand ecosystem functioning – high priority research topics include issues such as climate change effects and impacts, and the role and fate of top predators. Expert reviews from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) show that climate change will induce temperature changes and associated adjustments in ocean circulation, ice coverage and sea level. Such changes will affect life-history parameters of marine top predators (mammals, birds, large pelagics) via changes in habitat features, e.g., ice cover and availability of food resources (bottom –up effects), or will alter the role that predators play in marine ecosystems (top-down effects). This session will focus on presentations that show how environmental change has affected life-history strategies among large marine predators, or how environmental change may affect the role that these species play as top-level predators in marine ecosystems.