Modelling Ecosystem Processes Acting On Upper Trophic Level Managed Species in the Salish Sea – Lessons Learned and Future Goals

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Modelling Ecosystem Processes in the Salish Sea
Lessons Learned and Future Goals for Salmon
Research and Management

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## General Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St. of Georgia</th>
<th>Cent. Puget Sd.</th>
<th>S. Puget Sd.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area (km²)</strong></td>
<td>8600</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max Depth (m)</strong></td>
<td>450</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Depth (m)</strong></td>
<td>155</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecopath Model</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># of species</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus Species</strong></td>
<td>Coho, Chinook</td>
<td>Demersal fishes</td>
<td>Bivalves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
% contribution of depth strata (m) to bathymetry

- SoG
- CBPS
- SPS

Legend:
- 0-20
- 20-50
- 50-100
- 100+
Biomasses of species by trophic groupings

(← ← higher to lower → →)

Biomass (t/km²)

SoG CBPS SPS

mammals birds salmon demersal ratfish forage bivalves
Harvests of major fisheries

(← ← higher to lower → →)

Harvest (t/km²)

- salmon
- herring
- rockfish
- flatfish
- demersal
- crabs
- bivalves
Purpose and use of SoG model

- Examine historic ecosystem mechanisms influencing changes in Coho and Chinook Salmon populations
- Emphasis on interactions with predators, prey and competitors
- Examine potential future effects of climate change on ecosystem – level processes
Ecosim emulation of historic SoG dynamics
Simulating potential effects of mammal predation on Chinook Salmon

White line: Simulated chinook mortality caused by killer whale predation

Yellow lines: Low to high range of chinook mortality from varying seal/sea lion diet composition, yellow dash is the medium scenario
Ecosim forecasts of future changes in Coho Salmon biomass under optimistic (blue) and pessimistic (red) climate change scenarios
Purpose and use of CBPS model

• **Support PSP goals by**
  – identifying meaningful indicators that can be used to monitor the efficacy of management actions,
  – quantify risk,
  – simulate alternate ecosystem management scenarios.

• **Uses include**
  – partitioning of mortality in modelled species,
  – examining ecosystem effects of bottom up forcing,
  – Examine cascades from changes in key predators,
  – Examine potential effects of ocean acidification on the food web,
  – Estimating ecosystem services provided by eelgrass
Examining sources of mortality on fished species in CBPS
Simulating top-down dynamics

Simulating a trophic cascade by imposing high mortality on raptors

Biomass forecasts from simulating fisheries continuing as at present (top) and with total fishing closure (bottom)
Purpose and use of SPS model

- Previous SPS ecosystem model built for NWIFC to examine changes in salmon populations
- Present SPS model will examine historic effects of shellfish harvest and aquaculture
- Examine potential ecosystem feedbacks from different shellfish management strategies
- Forecast likely ecosystem effects arising from bottom up forcing changes due to climate and regime shifts
- Significant detail in Pacific Salmon Groups
Benefits from synthesising results from Salish Sea models to salmon research and management

• In cases where the models suggest differing basin-level ecosystem mechanisms, we can improve management of migratory species, like salmon, by determining where basin-scale research and management is appropriate.

• In cases where models suggest ecosystem mechanisms are the same we can determine when and where Salish Sea scale research and management will be optimal.

• Identification of common knowledge gaps in determining research priorities.

• Identification of ecosystem indices useful at the scale of each basin and at the scale of the whole Salish Sea.
Steps to synthesising model results

• Model all basins of Salish Sea: Hood Canal and Strait of Juan de Fuca need to be examined
• Develop a list of key species and associated species groups significant to all basins of the Salish Sea. Coho and Chinook may be most appropriate salmon species, due to residency in the Salish Sea
• Develop a common historic reference period to examine potential historic bottom-up and top-down influences on Salmon and other key species
• Use historic dynamics to develop simulations of future changes under different production regimes and how management policies can mitigate these changes
• Examine how future choices in management (or lack of management) may influence trade offs in abundances of different species