Recent advances and global collaboration on small pelagic forage communities; their ecology, assessment, management and socio-economics

PICES-ICES Working Group on Small Pelagic Forage Communities (WG53/WGSPF)

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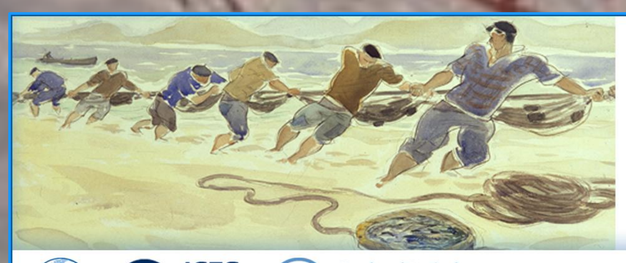
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2026 Small Pelagic Fish Symposium

By the numbers:

- 9 Topic Sessions
- 8 Workshops
- 174 Oral and 56 poster presentations

- **226 participants**
- **36 Countries**
- **130 organizations represented**

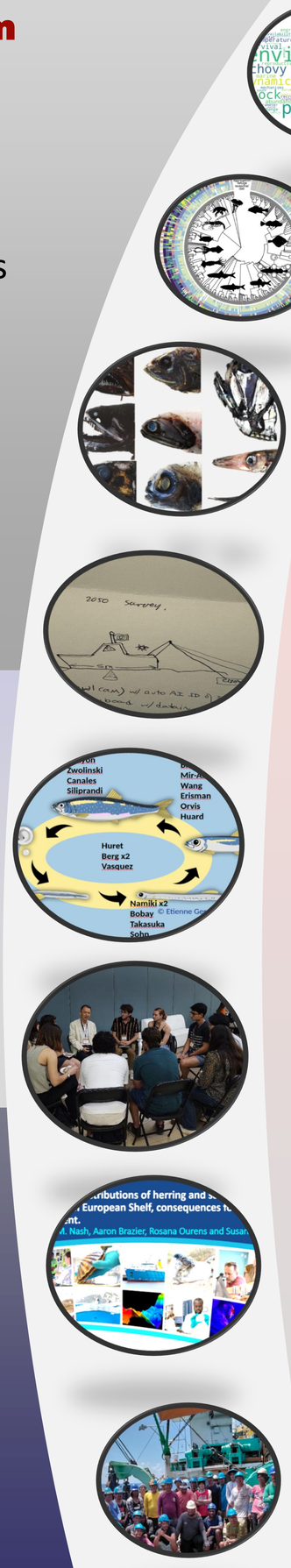
105 Early Career Ocean Professionals (46%)



ECOP Award Winners!

Journal Special Issues

2017 2022 2026



Key Messages

- Changes in spatio-temporal distributions are challenging fisheries management across the globe. At times our ecosystems are changing faster than we can include them in models and management systems.
- Novel and developing technologies and their use in studying and managing small pelagics were also key themes throughout all the symposium sessions. Examples included:
  - Genomics methods that help unravel population structure and stock mixing processes
  - Archeogenomic techniques are a powerful tool for investigating historical perceptions of population diversity
  - Increasing ability of researchers to integrate new and underutilized data streams (e.g. fisheries dependent acoustics)
  - New technologies that allow examination of old paradigms (e.g. population genetics, stable isotopes)
- EAFM is an obligation, not an option! Environmental variability (including climate change) are the dominant drivers of the dynamics of small pelagics and fishers need to be included in EAFM
  - Communication between scientists, managers, and other stakeholders was highlighted as increasingly important, especially when considering the trade-offs between complexity (ecological realism), statistical robustness and the pace of ecosystem changes.
  - A key theme of the symposium was improving the integration between fisheries management, science, and socioeconomic understanding. In turn this will help us turn ecological knowledge into actionable management advice

Want to learn more?

