Using Expert Elicitation to Inform Ocean Acidification Policy

Ocean Acidification represents a significant threat to many organisms that depend on the ocean for resources and habitat, including human beings. It is progressing at a faster rate than any time in 300 million years and polar scientists have published studies this year showing even faster than expected pH change and shoaling of the aragonite compensation depth. The positive feedback loops between global warming, ocean acidification, and marine pollution may stress many aquatic species beyond their ability to cope.

At the same time, policymakers and the public are generally unaware of the phenomenon. Those who are beginning to note the seriousness of the problem, recently reported in key Capitol Hill information sources like *Roll Call* and the *Washington Post*, find themselves stymied by the lack of clear communication from the scientific community on what to expect and what they can do now to help their constituents. In a situation where the science isn't able to unambiguously define an agenda for the government, expert elicitation can help in preliminary priority setting and policy design, especially if it is organized in a politically relevant fashion and updated as new results are published.

This presentation will outline the expert elicitation method, examine the two expert elicitation studies published on ocean acidification to date, and suggest ways that this method and these studies can inform further ocean acidification policy research.

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