

INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES

Fishery Update

California

This information is compiled from California Department of Fish and Game reports.

In Monterey, there were no coastal pelagic species (CPS) landings during the first week and a half of January 2004 due to the small size and heavy anchovy mixture. Larger sardines were found (sample average 80 g-150 g) with some fish more than 200 g. Landings were irregular in size and frequency due to the inability of the fleet to find the fish, however, January's landings were still the largest since last January. In addition, the largest amount of Pacific mackerel since 1998 and the first since June 2003 was landed in only two days. The fish were caught off Point Sur, however, poor weather caused boats to stop targeting them.

San Pedro sardine landings were double those of December 2003; most fish have been small, with occasional large fish caught in the same area. Fish sampled in January 2004 averaged 142 mm (range 107 mm-225 mm) and 42.5 g (14.2 g-138 g). Pacific mackerel landings dropped by half from December 2003, but there were several pure loads of jack mackerel landed. Boats fished along the coast from Pt. Vicente to Del Mar, and at Santa Catalina Island and 14-Mile Bank.

In 2004, 5,667.64 mt of sardine have been landed. Since July 2003, 5,296.51 mt of Pacific mackerel have been landed. For Pacific mackerel, the 10,652 mt harvest guideline was apportioned into a directed fishery and an incidental allowance. 7,500 mt was apportioned to the directed fishery, 3,152 mt of the harvest guideline is to be utilized for incidental landings following the closure of the directed fishery. When the 7,500 mt is caught, no more than 40% by weight of a landing of Pacific sardine, northern anchovy, jack mackerel, or market squid can consist of Pacific mackerel. If the Pacific mackerel fishery continues at the current pace the directed fishery may close prior to the end of the 2004-2005 season, which starts July 1, 2004.

Sardine Fishery

For the 2003 season, approximately 37,000 mt of sardine were landed in California. Oregon and Washington CPS fisheries have not operated since October 2003. 2003 landings into Oregon and Washington totaled 25,258 mt and 11,604 mt, respectively. Oregon landings increased from 2002 when 22,711 mt were landed into Oregon ports. Washington landings decreased from 2002 when 15,212 mt were landed into Washington ports.

The 2004 Pacific sardine harvest guideline opened January 1 with 122,474 mt. Per the revised allocation framework, the harvest guideline was initially allocated 33% to the northern subarea (Subarea A) and 66% to the southern subarea (Subarea B). The dividing line between the two areas is Point Arena, California (39° N latitude).

Information on Oregon sardine fisheries is available at –

<http://hmsc.oregonstate.edu/odfw/finfish/CPS.html>

Information on Washington sardine fisheries is available at –

<http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/fish/commercial/sardine>

For Pacific mackerel, the 10,652 mt harvest guideline was apportioned into a directed fishery and an incidental allowance. 7,500 mt was apportioned to the directed fishery, 3,152 mt of the harvest guideline is to be utilized for incidental landings following the closure of the directed fishery. Thus, during the 2003-2004 season, after 7,500 mt is landed, no more than 40% by weight of a landing of Pacific sardine, northern anchovy, jack mackerel, or market squid can consist of Pacific mackerel.

Long-Term Allocation Fishery Management Plan Amendment

The Council has not formally initiated an amendment to the CPS fishery management plan (FMP) for a more comprehensive revision of the Pacific sardine allocation framework. However, the regulatory amendment recently adopted by the Council, if implemented, would be in effect through 2005 at maximum. The following schedule and considerations are provided for information purposes to illustrate potential timing of FMP amendment activities and availability of necessary information. January 1, 2006 is used as the end point because, as noted, the interim allocation could run through 2005.

At the April 2004 Council meeting, it is anticipated the Council will formally initiate an amendment to the CPS FMP.

Initial Tentative Schedule

- January 1, 2006 – new allocation framework implemented.
- June 2005 – final Council action.
- March 2005 – preliminary Council action.
- November 2004 – first set of alternatives and preliminary analyses reviewed by Council.
- Summer 2004 – scoping/public hearings.

Considerations

- New biological information (July 2003 and January 2004 Oregon/Washington research cruises) complete by spring/summer 2004.
- Stock Assessment Review (STAR) process – scheduled for June 2004, with report to Council in September 2004.
- New/expanded economic information survey completed by summer 2004.
- New assessment model, including improved understanding of stock structure and whether biomass trend is stable, decreasing, or increasing should be available in 2005.
- Council guidance from April 2003 – develop framework that provides flexibility and harmonizes allocation with environmental conditions, stock status, and market dynamics.

2004 CPS Schedule

The following tentative schedule was developed by staff for planning purposes.

March

Staff informational report in briefing book (BB) – no Council action.

April

Potential CPS Management Team (CPSMT)/CPS Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS)/staff report(s) re: need for sardine allocation FMP amendment;
Council action = formal initiation of FMP amendment;
File Notice of Intent to do Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for sardine allocation FMP amendment.

May

Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document produced for June BB;
CPSMT/CPSAS meetings re: Pacific mackerel, SAFE, etc. ca. May 19;
Scoping sessions/hearings re sardine allocation scheduled;
FR for June 21 CPS STAR workshop due May 28.

June

Council action = adopt Pacific mackerel harvest guideline;
Scoping sessions/hearings held re: sardine allocation.
CPS STAR workshop – week of June 21 in La Jolla;
Consider/plan for need for temporary sardine allocation action for 2005.

July - September

Work up results of scoping sessions/hearings;
Work up results of STAR workshop.

October

Week of October 4 (ca.), CPS meetings re Pacific sardine stock assessment and harvest guideline, STAR workshop results, allocation need for 2005 sardine fishery, initial alternatives for sardine allocation FMP amendment.

November

Council action = adopt sardine harvest guideline for 2005, address 2005 allocation (if necessary), review CPSMT/CPSAS reports re: FMP amendment (including initial suite of alternatives) and provide guidance/direction (formal action, i.e., "preliminary adoption" on allocation alternatives would occur at March 2005 meeting).

CPS STAR Workshop

The CPS STAR is scheduled for the week of June 21, 2004 in La Jolla, California. Currently, National Marine Fisheries Service–Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) is organizing meeting logistics. More information will be provided at the April meeting.

Other Matters

SWFSC reports that a post-doctoral candidate has begun working on squid population modeling, as well as CPS-related (e.g., Pacific sardine and potentially, squid) “hard part micro-chemistry” analysis for evaluating ageing methods and assumptions regarding spatial distribution.

PFMC
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