COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE PACIFIC SARDINE STOCK ASSESSMENT AND HARVEST GUIDELINE

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met October 19, 2006 in Portland, Oregon. At the meeting, the CPSAS heard a presentation from Dr. Kevin Hill, reviewing the preliminary results from the Pacific sardine stock assessment utilizing the Age-Structured Assessment Program (ASAP) model. The report included the recommended preliminary harvest guideline (HG) of 152,564 mt for the 2007 fishery, 34,627 mt higher than the 2006 HG. The CPSAS unanimously agrees this stock assessment represents the best available science at this time. The CPSAS supports the recommended preliminary HG, which is based on the harvest formula defined in the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The CPSAS also recommends a 45 percent incidental catch rate be allowed for other CPS fisheries in the event that a seasonal allocation be taken before the end of an allocation period or the HG is taken before the end of the year.

The CPSAS is pleased that a synoptic survey of the sardine resource took place in April 2006, although Daily Egg Production Method (DEPM) data used in the assessment included only the standard survey area from San Diego to San Francisco. The CPSAS recommends that coastwide synoptic surveys continue on an annual basis and that data collected during these surveys, including DEPM data collected in the area from San Francisco to British Columbia be included in the assessment model for the 2007 stock assessment. Including the full spawning range will produce more accurate assessments.

The CPSAS appreciates that fisheries data from the Pacific Northwest (PNW) were fully incorporated in this assessment. Additional research is needed to fully evaluate stock structure, differential growth and migration rates of subpopulations, spawning contribution and the relationship of PNW sardine to the spawning biomass as a whole.

The CPSAS recommends the Council encourage the National Marine Fisheries Service to continue to fund comprehensive coastwide annual CPS research, including the survey off the PNW, and encourage similar cooperative surveys in Canada and Mexico.

The CPSAS continues to believe strongly that coordinated international management of CPS fisheries is essential to avoid the potential for coastwide overfishing. Moreover, the CPSAS also agrees that inclusion of complete Mexican catch statistics is vital to the CPS assessment process. The CPSAS encourages the Council and NMFS and the State Department to continue working to achieve timely receipt of research data from Mexico.

PFMC
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