

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON EMERGENCY IN-  
SEASON ACTION IN THE 2014-15 PACIFIC SARDINE FISHERY

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) urges the Council's consideration of the following points in deliberations regarding emergency action to close the sardine fishery for the remainder of the 2014-15 fishery:

1. This issue is before the Council based on a revised stock assessment - not because overfishing is occurring. It is critically important to make this distinction.
2. The CPSAS highlights Table 1 from Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental SSC Report, as well as Table 1 from Agenda Item J.2.a, Supplemental CPSMT Report, which indicate that the current estimated harvest and the total projected harvest for 2014-2015 are less than the revised Overfishing Limit (OFL) (29,256 mt) and the revised Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) (26,706 mt). Clearly, based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) reports, the revised OFL, and the revised ABC, Pacific sardine is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring.
3. The 2015-2016 stock assessment update assumed the 2014-2015 harvest guideline (HG) would be caught in its entirety, thus the approximately 2,333 mt remaining in the HG have already been accounted for in the upcoming year's biomass projections.
4. The estimated 2015-2016 biomass is above the Minimum Stock Size Threshold of 50,000 mt.
5. The update assessment was based on 2014 spring and summer surveys, and does **not** take into consideration spawning activity currently observed off Oregon by the 2015 spring sardine survey and small sardines recently observed in both Oregon and California.

Based on all of the points above, and the recent Council decision to close the directed fishery for the 2015-2016 fishing year, the CPSAS believes that emergency action is not warranted.

If the Council ultimately decides to close the directed fishery before the end of season, please clarify that this action is being taken as an added precaution, not because sardines are being overfished. It is also essential to maintain an incidental sardine catch allowance in other CPS fisheries for the remainder of this period in order to keep CPS boats fishing and processors' doors open.

As noted in Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental CPSAS report, based on current market conditions and 2,333 mt of foregone catch, a closure would result in a loss of nearly \$1,000,000 in ex-vessel value. Foregone processing and other related activities, using a conservative 2.7 multiplier, results in an estimated total economic loss of about \$3,000,000.

Sardine schools also have reappeared in southern California over the weekend. San Pedro fishermen are now bringing in a catch of predominately sardine, in a range of sizes — both large and small. With the additional effort, the remaining harvest guideline may be taken quickly.

PFMC  
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