

PACIFIC SARDINE DISTRIBUTION WORKSHOP

In August 2015, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) co-hosted a workshop to examine the Distribution parameter used in the sardine harvest control rule (HCR). The workshop was a requirement of the settlement agreement (H.1, Attachment 1) resulting from the *Oceana v. Pritzker* court case. The purposes of the workshop, as described in the settlement agreement, are:

To examine and discuss the DISTRIBUTION parameter in the Pacific sardine harvest control rule used in setting management reference points to account for the presence of sardine in the waters of the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Workshop participants are expected to compile the best available scientific information on the distribution of Pacific sardines along the North American Pacific coast as well as examine potential alternative means of accounting for the fact that some portion of Pacific sardine stock exists and is subject to catch outside of U.S. waters.

The settlement agreement describes four alternatives to be analyzed at the workshop:

- Setting Distribution annually as part of the specifications process based on the most recent data on the actual mean distribution of the Pacific sardine stock in U.S. waters;
- Using landings information from Canada and Mexico to account for catch in the waters of those nations in estimating Distribution, using work from recently published scientific studies regarding Pacific sardine management;
- Estimating the stock biomass in U.S. waters only, instead of the total sardine biomass, in the stock assessment;
- Using a numerical-based Distribution parameter as an alternative to the existing percent-based Distribution parameter.

Council and NMFS staff added a fifth alternative for consideration, and the conservation group Oceana proposed a sixth, respectively:

- Using a temperature-based model to predict the proportion of Pacific sardines in U.S. waters in a particular year; and
- Problem statement, requests for analysis, and considerations for revising the Pacific sardine Distribution parameter.

The settlement agreement further stipulates that the Council will review the workshop results (Agenda Item H.1.a, Pacific Sardine Distribution Workshop Report), as well as the advice of Council advisory bodies and public comment, at the November 2015 meeting, to determine whether further action on this matter is warranted. Should the Council determine that further action regarding the Distribution parameter, or other method for taking into account the presence of Pacific sardine coast-wide is warranted, the Council will make a recommendation to NMFS at one or more of the March, April, or June 2016 Council meetings. NMFS has associated obligations regarding consideration of the Distribution parameter, which are described in the settlement agreement.

Council Task:

1. Consider the report of the August 2015 Pacific Sardine Distribution Workshop.
2. Consider whether the information considered at the workshop warrants further exploration of changing the Distribution parameter in the Pacific sardine HCR.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.1, Attachment 1: Oceana vs. Pritzker Settlement Agreement.
2. Agenda Item H.1.a, Pacific Sardine Distribution Workshop Report.
3. Agenda Item H.1.b, National Marine Fisheries Service Letter.
4. Agenda Item H.1.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

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| H.1 Pacific Sardine Distribution Workshop | Kerry Griffin |
| a. Pacific Sardine Distribution Workshop Report | Owen Hamel |
| b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities | |
| c. Public Comment | |
| d. Council Action: Discuss Workshop Report and Provide Guidance as Appropriate | |

PFMC
10/22/15