

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
ARTISANAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT ISSUE SCOPING

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) reviewed a statement from the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) that was requested by the Council, asking the CPSMT to review issues and potential options to provide for a small directed take of sardine during fishery closures. The CPSMT statement took a broader view and applied the discussion to all CPS finfish, excluding market squid. The CPSAS further discussed issues and concerns during a joint meeting with the CPSMT.

CPSMT Chair, Ms. Lorna Wargo, explained that the focus of the request was to provide opportunity for small businesses who had harvested sardine (and other CPS) in “de minimis” amounts to be able to continue targeting CPS, specifically sardine, during directed fishery closures. This would be similar to the current allowances provided for live bait and the incidental catch limits allowed for CPS and other fisheries to maintain their other fisheries during closed periods.

The CPSAS acknowledges and appreciates the continuation of pre-existing small, high value fisheries for dead bait and human consumption. However, several members expressed concern that their businesses also suffer during these periods. Further, allowing a directed open access fishery for CPS for existing fishery participants, absent strict catch limits, could encourage new and expanded fishing effort. This expansion of fishing, at a time when the resource is closed for conservation purposes, could also trigger closure of all fisheries if the total annual catch limit was exceeded, an unintended consequence.

The CPSAS needs more information to understand the economic rationale and scope for this request. We would appreciate reviewing a CPSMT report detailing the purpose and need for this action, and documenting the quantity and value of the small landings over a period of years, before we can make informed recommendations about how to move forward.