

PACIFIC SARDINE HARVEST FRACTION

At its March 2014 meeting, the Council heard a report from the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) including recommendations for incorporating best available scientific information on sea surface temperature (SST) into the Pacific sardine harvest control rules (HCR), specifically the harvest guideline (HG) control rule. The current sardine HG control rule includes a harvest fraction parameter that is based on the SST as measured at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography (SIO) pier. However, a 2013 panel of experts made a recommendation, subsequently endorsed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Council, to use the California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) temperature index as well as a revised F_{msy} relationship, for use in the HCR. The Council adopted the technical change of using the CalCOFI temperature index, rather than the SIO temperature recordings, for the best estimate of a temperature-productivity relationship, used to calculate the annual overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) for Pacific sardine. The new temperature index and new temperature-productivity relationship was used for establishing the OFL starting with the April 2014 meeting, when the Council established harvest specifications and management measures for the fishing year beginning July 1, 2014.

The HG control rule will continue to use the SIO temperature and temperature-productivity relationship, and a 5-15 percent harvest fraction range, until the Council takes action to change the control rule. Before applying the new (CalCOFI) temperature index and temperature-productivity relationship in the HG control rule, the Council requested evaluation of additional alternatives regarding the bounds on the harvest fraction term, including 0-20 percent and 5-20 percent, in relation to the current policy of allowing relatively higher harvest rates in periods of high biomass and productivity, but constraining harvest rates when biomass and productivity are low. These alternatives are in addition to the options already analyzed by the CPSMT, including their recommended option of a 10-20 percent harvest fraction range. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff, Council staff, and the CPSMT prepared a preliminary draft Environmental Assessment (EA) with alternatives for Council consideration, included as Agenda Item C.1.a, Attachment 1.

Under the framework management approach used for CPS, a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment is not necessary in order to develop or modify HCRs. The CPS FMP describes four procedures for making framework changes, depending on the particular situation or action: Automatic Actions, Notice Actions, Abbreviated Rulemaking Actions, and Full Rulemaking Actions. Given the public interest in CPS management and the nature of the changes being considered, staff recommends the Full Rulemaking Action, which requires at least two Council meetings, public notice, and comment.

In order for the Council to use the new harvest fraction parameters for the subsequent fishing year (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016), the Council must take final action (selection of a final preferred alternative) at its November 2014 meeting. After final Council action, the process will consist of transmittal of the action to NMFS, regulatory deeming, and proposed and final rulemaking. The Council is scheduled to set Pacific sardine harvest specifications and management measures at its April 2015 meeting.

At this meeting, the Council should consider the draft purpose and need statement, the suite of alternatives, and the analysis. The Council may adopt a preliminary preferred alternative to focus comment in advance of final action at the November 2014 meeting.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider the draft purpose and need statement, the list of harvest fraction alternatives, and the preliminary analysis of alternatives.**
- 2. Adopt preliminary preferred harvest fraction alternative.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.1.a, Attachment 1: Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment for incorporating best available science into harvest management control rules for Pacific sardine.
2. Agenda Item C.1.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kerry Griffin/Lorna Wargo
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Preliminary Preferred Alternative for the Pacific Sardine Harvest Fraction Parameter.

PFMC
08/20/14