

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE WEST COAST REGION STRATEGIC PLAN

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) received a briefing from Jennifer Ise and Jerry Hornoff (with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)) on the NOAA Fisheries West Coast Strategic Plan. The CPSAS appreciated the opportunity to ask specific questions regarding NMFS goals and objectives for the next five years. During this briefing, the CPSAS reviewed in detail the Sustainable Fisheries objectives and discussed potential improvements to NMFS Organization Excellence objectives that could be included in the strategic plan. The CPSAS would like to provide the following additions and edits to the draft strategic plan.

Sustainable Fishing

Objective 1 – Participation and Co-management

- The CPSAS recommends clarifying and expanding upon the term “co-managers” throughout this objective. As currently drafted, “co-managers” include Tribes, the Council, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and States but it does not include any non-governmental fishery stakeholders. The CPSAS discussed a number of co-management examples involving fisheries’ stakeholder partnerships with state and Federal agencies, and the benefits of cooperative management approaches involving stakeholders. In addition to expanding the definition of “co-manager,” the CPSAS recommends considering the inclusion of a seventh bullet that speaks specifically to co-management goals. Item 6 of this objective mentions cooperative (collaborative) research, which is important in its own right, but is also a stepping stone to cooperative management with stakeholders.

Objective 2 – Social and Economic Contributions

- The CPSAS recommends including “states” under item 4, to the list of stakeholders NMFS intends to collaborate with.
- Regarding item 5, enhancing community resilience and supporting sustainable working waterfronts, the CPSAS would like to highlight this as a particularly important and complex objective. Understanding that mechanisms have not yet been established to achieve this objective, the CPSAS encourages NMFS to involve the fishing industry and other stakeholders in the development of programs intended to support communities and working waterfronts.

Objective 3 – Stewardship

- The CPSAS recommends adding the “U.S. fishing industry” as a partner under bullet 5 and clarifying that reductions in fleet capacity are focused primarily on international fishing capacity, and not limited solely to the U.S. fleet. Any plans for U.S. fleet reduction should always involve industry and other stakeholders for guidance and advice. Proposed revised text is included below:

Work with international partners **and the U.S. fishing industry** to improve sustainability of shared stocks, address illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing,

and reduce **international** fleet capacity in the eastern Pacific Ocean as deemed appropriate and necessary to achieve sustainability and conservation goals.

Objective 5 – Science and Technology

- The CPSAS discussed three science and research goals for NMFS prioritization:
 - the inclusion of the Southern California Bight in the Atlantis model in a more comprehensive manner (i.e. letter from Dr. Richard Parrish, Agenda Item H.1.c Supplemental Public Comment, November 2014)
 - Additional research to understand the distribution and catch of the northern and southern subpopulations of Pacific sardine.
 - Supportive research and stock analysis that allows for future opportunities to harvest additional CPS species in accordance with Magnuson-Stevens Act and other fisheries' policy.

The CPSAS also recommends that NMFS develop a national policy for commercial fisheries parallel to that of aquaculture and recreational fishing policies, highlighting the importance of U.S. commercial fisheries to the economy and domestic seafood production. This policy would specify objectives and strategies to assist the agency in prioritizing commercial fishing goals and allocating necessary resources (including funding) to those priorities.

Organizational Excellence

The CPSAS noted its excellent working relationship with NMFS staff and timely response to management needs and priorities. However, some CPS fishery members are also active participants in other Federal FMP fisheries, where workload, inefficient processes, and staffing constraints have limited the agency's effectiveness and thereby fishery performance. The CPSAS recommends that NMFS include in its list of strategies a review of staffing needs and exploration of new processes to ensure timely and responsive rulemaking. Our belief is that fishery stakeholders /organizations can develop partnerships with NMFS in advisory, research, or even limited management roles that would complement and augment NMFS resources and staff, facilitating fulfillment of their many assigned responsibilities.

PFMC
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