

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
PACIFIC MACKEREL MANAGEMENT FOR 2010-2011

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) met June 13-14, 2010 to review management and research recommendations for Pacific mackerel for the 2010-11 fishing season and discuss these topics with the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS). In May 2009, a full stock assessment for Pacific mackerel was reviewed by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel in La Jolla, California and subsequently, by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) in June 2009 in Spokane, Washington. The Council adopted the Pacific mackerel stock assessment and the following harvest specifications and management measures for the 2009 fishing year (July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010):

- 1) establish an acceptable biological catch (ABC) of 55,408 metric ton (mt) and a harvest guideline (HG) for the directed fishery of 10,000 mt, which includes an incidental set-aside of 2,000 mt for incidental catch in non-directed fisheries;
- 2) should the directed fishery attain landings of 8,000 mt, the Council recommends that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) close the directed fishery and revert to an incidental-catch-only fishery with a 45 percent incidental landing allowance when Pacific mackerel are landed with other coastal pelagic species (CPS), with the exception that up to 1 mt of Pacific mackerel could be landed without landing any other CPS; and,
- 3) to provide time to address research and data needs associated with the ongoing Pacific mackerel stock assessment, the Council recommends no assessment be conducted in 2010, with a full assessment conducted in 2011.

The CPSAS expressed concerns about the 10,000 mt HG, particularly the relatively small 2,000 mt set aside for incidental catch in other CPS fisheries. The CPSMT does not object to the CPSAS's request to increase the HG to 16,000 mt because there is no biological reason to not allow harvest at this level given an ABC of 55,408 mt. Regardless of the HG that the Council chooses, the CPSMT recommends an incidental catch allowance for other CPS fisheries of at least 3,000 mt. The CPSMT's recommendation to increase the incidental catch allowance is based on its previous analysis which suggested that 3,000 mt should be adequate for Pacific mackerel catch in other CPS fisheries (Agenda Item F.1.a, Attachment1, Draft CPS SAFE, Table 2-2, subsection October 3, 2002).

The CPSMT recognizes that efforts have been undertaken to address recommendations outlined in the 2009 reviews regarding critical areas of research needed to improve overall model robustness and strengthen the next full stock assessment scheduled for May 2011. These include:

- 1) Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) staff continues to make progress with collaborative efforts with Mexico. For example, SWFSC staff have recently participated in meetings hosted by fishery researchers in Mexico (both Federal and academic institutions) that addressed issues from modeling to data exchange.
- 2) SWFSC staff and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) researchers have further explored sensitivity analyses involving the index of relative abundance included in the current assessment model, which is based on a Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel survey. Specifically, issues surrounding catchability and/or selectivity,

particularly concerning time-varying vs. constant parameterization of this influential recreational fishery-based time series are being examined.

- 3) SWFSC and CDFG have jointly developed a research outline and begun field/laboratory efforts collecting, processing, and analyzing reproductive samples from Pacific mackerel harvested in both the recreational and commercial fisheries. It is important to note that an 'aggressive' sampling plan year over a 2 to 4 year time horizon will be required to accumulate enough samples to develop an updated maturity schedule for use in stock assessments due to limited landings of this species, coupled with few field-based surveys.

Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

The draft CPS SAFE is available for public review. The draft contains information for Essential Fish Habitat. The CPSMT has conducted an initial review of relevant literature for EFH. Council and NMFS staff will continue to work with the CPSMT to provide a full review of EFH for the November Council meeting.

PFMC
06/15/10