

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON  
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT (EFP) FOR SARDINE AERIAL SURVEY RESEARCH

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) held a joint conference call with the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel on April 8, 2010, to discuss the revised exempted fishing permit (EFP) application for 2010 aerial sardine survey research. The applicants provided an overview, noting the changes made in response to the Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) March 2010 request. The EFP will allow industry representatives to harvest sardines outside of the directed fishing periods in the summer and fall of 2010. The methods for the summer research will be the same as those carried out in 2009. However, the survey area will extend from the US/Canada border into southern California, whereas in 2009, Point Reyes was the southern bound of the survey. The fall research period will be used to explore new methods for assessing sardine biomass in the southern California Bight.

During the March 2010 Council meeting, the CPSMT reviewed the draft EFP application and made several requests for changes in a revised EFP application. These included: 1) develop protocols to ensure on a daily basis that the data collected from the EFP point sets are scientifically acceptable and useable; 2) include explicit protocols for spatial distribution of the point sets and how the survey design will be further revised in accordance with Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel Recommendations from September 2009; and 3) concurrence with the suite of recommendations that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) developed in 2009. In addition, the Council requested that a weekly summary of point sets and photos be transmitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) point of contact, and that the applicants incorporate the 2009 STAR Panel recommendations.

The CPSMT commends the applicants on the effort and the changes made to the application. The CPSMT notes two remaining issues not yet fully addressed, that can be clarified relatively easily with modest additions to specific sections of the EFP application. The CPSMT suggests that the applicants develop a one or two page addendum to be considered by the Council, and would be subsequently incorporated into the EFP application.

Specifically, the CPSMT recommends the following:

- The applicants should include a template or an example for transmitting a weekly summary of point set and photography information to the NMFS point of contact.
- The applicants should include a more specific protocol for ensuring that representative points are captured in the western section of transects. Attempts should be made to ensure that the distribution of point set samples is more representative of the biomass observed from aerial photographs. Currently, the application states (pg AI-6, paragraph 3) that "*in each zone, efforts will be made to distribute the point sets offshore vs. nearshore, as well.*" The applicants noted several challenges in making offshore point sets during our discussion. The CPSMT would like to see some more detail describing the potential challenges with obtaining offshore point sets, and the logistical details that would make completion of offshore point sets possible.

The CPSMT recognizes the value of the EFP research and resulting data, and finds merit in continuing this research. The combination of Federal, state, and private research serves to enhance our collective understanding of our fisheries, and should be supported whenever possible. The CPSMT proposes that the Council recommend issuance of the EFP by NMFS.

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