

PACIFIC SARDINE STOCK ASSESSMENT AND COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES (CPS)
MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2012

At this meeting, the Council will hear a report on the 2011 Pacific sardine stock assessment, adopt harvest specifications and management measures for the 2012 Pacific sardine fishing season, and be prepared to consider a proposal for reviewing a new sardine survey method.

A full stock assessment for Pacific sardine was completed in 2011. Full assessments for CPS stocks typically occur every two to three years, with updates conducted in the intervening years, based on the same methodology and assessment protocols used for the previous full assessment. The 2011 Pacific sardine assessment (Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 1), conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC), utilized new abundance data from three survey methods: The SWFSC's Daily Egg Production Model (Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 2), the industry-led aerial sardine survey (Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 3), and the SWFSC's acoustic-trawl survey (Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 4).

In October 2011, the results of the surveys and the full stock assessment were reviewed by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel consisting of two Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) members, a Northeast Fisheries Science Center scientist, and an independent reviewer provided by the Council of Independent Experts (CIE). The STAR Panel produced a report on the assessment (Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 5), and the CIE reviewer will submit a separate report (Agenda Item F.2.b, Supplemental Attachment 7). Representatives of the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) and the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS), although not members of the STAR Panel, attended in an advisory capacity to the Panel.

At the November Council meeting, the SSC will review the Pacific sardine assessment and make an Overfishing Limit (OFL) recommendation on which to base management measures. The Council will consider a range of Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) levels associated with various P* alternatives, and will establish harvest measures, including an Annual Catch Limit (ACL) and possibly an Annual Catch Target (ACT). The CPSMT and the CPSAS will also be in session at the November meeting and will provide recommendations to the Council on 2012 sardine management measures, including harvest set-asides for incidental landings of Pacific sardine in other CPS fisheries, and for research activities conducted under an EFP.

Amendment 13 to the CPS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to address revised National Standard 1 guidelines was recently approved by the Secretary of Commerce. Therefore, the Council should adopt management measures, including ACLs that are consistent with Amendment 13.

The Council will also consider a proposal for reviewing a new sardine survey method for use in future stock assessments (Agenda Item F.2.b Attachment 6). The Canadian West Coast Vancouver Island Swept Area Trawl Survey has not in the past been included in U.S. Pacific sardine stock assessments. The review and approval procedure for any new survey method would follow the Council's Terms of Reference for CPS Methodology Review Panels.

In a letter dated August 31, 2011, the Quinault Indian Nation provided notice of their intent to participate in the 2012 sardine fishery, with an anticipated allocation need of 9,000 mt. (Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1). The letter and its implications were discussed briefly at the September Council meeting where a number of questions were posed as to how such an allocation would mesh with the CPS Fishery Management Plan provisions, including such matters as whether the allocation would be subtracted from the total ACL and how any uncaught remainder might be treated. Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 2 provides a listing of hypothetical questions and the relevant excerpts from the CPS FMP regarding mandated or flexible procedures that address the questions. During the Council discussion in September, NMFS expressed the intent to informally discuss, prior to the November meeting, information associated with Federal, Council, State, and Tribal processes in place to address treaty tribe fishing rights for Pacific sardines.

Council Action:

- 1. Approve the Pacific Sardine Assessment and Pacific sardine OFL.**
- 2. Select P*, ABC, ACL and, if appropriate, ACT Specifications and Management Measures; Including Consideration of a Quinault Tribal Allocation.**
- 3. Consider a Review Process for a New Sardine Survey Method.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1: August 31, 2011 letter from Ed Johnstone, Quinault Fisheries Policy Spokesperson, regarding the Quinault Indian Nation's intent to establish a tribal allocation and to enter the 2012 Pacific sardine fishery.
2. Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 2: Management questions and relevant CPS FMP excerpt regarding the Quinault Indian Nation's intents for 2012.
3. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 1: *Assessment of the Pacific Sardine Resource in 2011 for U.S. Management in 2012, Executive Summary.*
4. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 2: Southwest Fisheries Science Center's (SWFSC) Daily Egg Production Model Survey Report. **(Electronic only).**
5. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 3: Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey – Sampling Results in 2011. **(Electronic only).**
6. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 4: SWFSC's Acoustic-Trawl Survey Report, 2011. **(Electronic only).**
7. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 5: 2011 Pacific Sardine STAR Panel Report.
8. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 6: Proposal to Review Canadian Swept Area Trawl Survey Methodology.
9. Agenda Item F.2.b, Supplemental Attachment 7: CIE Independent STAR Panel Report.
10. Agenda Item F.2.d, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Survey and Assessment Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Approve the Pacific Sardine Assessment and Final 2012 Management Measures for CPS; and Consider Methodology Review Proposal

Kerry Griffin
Kevin Hill