

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS FOR 2010

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) received an overview from Mr. Tom Jagielo and Ms. Diane Pleschner-Steele on the West Coast Aerial Sardine Survey application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP). 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, Monterey 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.

For the summer portion of the EFP, the investigators will carry out aerial transects and point sets to estimate sardine abundance within the survey area. The CPSMT notes that in 2009, of the 80 point sets that were conducted, data from 28 of those point sets were valid and used in the 2009 sardine stock assessment. In November 2009, the CPSMT requested that the applicants revise their protocols to ensure that the data collected from the EFP point sets are scientifically acceptable and useable. Specifically, the CPSMT requested that the applicants outline clear and concise methods in the 2010 EFP application that describe the steps that will be taken to check the data after each point set to make sure the methods were carried out correctly before allowing a purse seine vessel to capture sardine in a subsequent point set. After review of the 2010 EFP application, the CPSMT found that specific language clearly explaining the steps that will be used to verify data acceptability between point sets and aerial photography had not been included; the CPSMT requests that the EFP language be revised to include such details.

In 2009, two vessels were allowed to operate within a fishing region to collect point set data for the EFP research. For 2010, the applicants are requesting that 4 vessels be allowed to operate at the same time within a region. The CPSMT acknowledges that having this allowance could be beneficial for field operations; however, the CPSMT requests that the applicants verify the validity of the data for point sets (w/aerial photographs) before completing multiple subsequent point sets. Therefore, the CPSMT requests weekly reports from the investigators regarding the success of completing point sets (w/aerial photography) and the validity of the corresponding data. Deciding that pilots and vessels are adequately trained to allow for multiple point sets to occur in one day is at the discretion of the investigators. The CPSMT expects that the investigators will minimize the number of invalid point sets (with aerial photographs).

Regarding the fall pilot project research, the CPSMT acknowledges the need to explore additional assessment techniques. The CPSMT notes that in 2009, 51 aerial transects with 3 replicates were planned and 41 transects of 1 replicate were completed. The CPSMT believes that the increases in sample size and survey area for 2010 are ambitious given the failure to achieve the completion of 1 replicate in a smaller survey area in 2009.

Therefore, the CPSMT recommends that the investigators place a higher priority on successfully completing the summer survey for 2010.

The CPSMT agrees with the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommendation that the EFP be revised to 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 Panel Recommendations from September 2009.

The CPSMT recognizes the value of the EFP research and resulting data and finds merit in continuing this research. The CPSMT recommends the Council encourage the National Marine Fisheries Service to continue to support coastwide annual CPS research, and recommends the proposal be approved for public review.

PFMC
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