

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES: SHIFTING SARDINE FISHERY START DATE

The Pacific sardine fishery currently follows the calendar year, starting January 1 and ending December 31. The fishing year is broken into three periods: January 1-June 30, July 1-September 15, and September 16-December 31. Each fishing period is allocated 35 percent, 40 percent, and 25 percent, respectively, of the total allowable harvest for that fishing year.

An issue that has become more apparent in recent years is the fact that two summer surveys (the Northwest Aerial Sardine Survey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's acoustic-trawl summer survey) face a very compressed time frame if they are to deliver their products to the Stock Assessment Team (STAT) sufficiently in advance of the stock assessment review meeting (typically in late September or early October). This in turn makes it challenging for the STAT to deliver the final stock assessment documents to the Council on time for the November briefing book deadline.

At the November 2012 Council meeting, the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) recommended working collaboratively with the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) to develop a white paper that would present the pros and cons of changing the start date. Although a fishery management plan amendment would not be required to implement a start date change, the Council would have to consider how to address several related issues that would be affected by the change. These are described in the joint CPSMT/CPSAS Report (Agenda Item I.2.b).

The Council is asked to consider a potential start date change (not sooner than 2014) and provide direction regarding next steps.

Council Action:

1. Consider Initiating Process to Shift the Start of the Sardine Fishery.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item I.2.b, CPSMT/CPSAS Report.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
 - b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. **Council Action:** Consider Initiating Process to Shift the Start of the Sardine Fishery
- Kerry Griffin