

Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel REPORT ON SHIFTING SARDINE FISHERY  
START DATE

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met jointly with the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) to review and discuss the Joint Report on Shifting the Sardine Fishery Start Date (Agenda Item I.2.b, CPSMT/CPSAS Report).

Discussion focused on the benefits of changing the start date to July 1 to provide more time for surveys to be conducted, the data to be analyzed, and the assessment to be completed. CPSAS members agreed that the additional time would improve data refinement and analysis, and reduce risk of errors in both the assessment and management process. Standardizing sardine and Pacific mackerel seasons and concurrent assessments would enhance efficiency and result in potential cost savings, as well as facilitate a transition to a species assemblage approach. They further noted the recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to change the start date to improve future stock assessments.

Initial concerns discussed included the delay in the use of field survey data until the following (spring) assessment. Stock assessments would be based on data six months to one year old, albeit better refined and analyzed. Some participants in the California industry voiced concern over potential future allocation. Further communication between California CPSAS members and their associates led to a better understanding of the rationale for the proposed change. At that point, initial opposition appeared to diminish.

In further discussion, a stock assessment team member outlined a process for transitioning to the new season framework. The CPSAS concluded that this is a viable option. A full stock assessment would be available for review at a stock assessment review (STAR) Panel in early 2014.

In the final analysis, the subpanel unanimously supports changing the fishery start date to July 1. The benefits to the entire stock assessment process will be extensive.

PFMC  
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