

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM Report on SHIFTING sardine
FISHERY START DATE

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) and the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) collaboratively developed a white paper to present the Council with the pros and cons of changing the sardine fishery start date (Agenda Item I.2). The CPSMT supports changing the start date of the fishery from January 1 to July 1 and recommends implementing this for 2014.

The CPSMT sees the need to allow analysts more time to process summer survey data and allow the Stock Assessment Team (STAT) to conduct a more thorough, detailed stock assessment and the greater opportunity for model exploration and sensitivity analyses. Further, if the Council chooses to adopt harvest control rules based on annual California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) sea surface temperature, this option will not be viable without the recommended change to the start date. CalCOFI data are collected through late October/early November, so annual averages would not be available for setting harvest specifications at the November Council meeting.

Should the Council choose to implement a start date change in 2014, the CPSMT recommends the following process to set catch specifications for 2014:

- Forego a full-scale update review by the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) CPS-Subcommittee this fall.
- Use the current assessment model to produce a simple catch-only projection update that would provide the basis for the first allocation period of 2014 (January 1 to June 30). The STAT would provide the update in an executive summary format.
- SSC review the abbreviated update at the November 2013 meeting. Council adopts management measures for January – June of 2014.
- Conduct a full stock assessment review in February 2014 for the following July 1 start date.
- Council adopts, in April 2014, the full stock assessment and management measures for July 1 – June 30, 2015.

The CPSMT recognizes that many high priority management items are on the CPS agenda in June. If there is a need to prioritize management actions, the CPSMT suggests that precedence be given to changing the fishery start date. To implement the new start date for July 1, 2014, final action must be taken at the June 2013 meeting.

Regardless of the Council's decision on changing the start date, the CPSMT concurs with the SSC on aligning the biomass estimate with the start of the fishery season.

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