

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
PACIFIC MACKEREL MANAGEMENT STATUS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met June 23, 2013 to review management and research recommendations for Pacific mackerel for the 2013-2014 fishing year, and to discuss the management status of Pacific mackerel. Discussion included the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) catch-only projection estimate of the Pacific mackerel biomass (Agenda Item I.2.b, Attachment 2) for setting 2013-2014 harvest management specifications.

**Harvest and Management Specifications**

The CPSAS concurs with Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) recommendations (1), (2) and (3) in Agenda Item I.2.c, Supplemental CPSMT Report, for the 2013-14 fishery with the following observations.

The Pacific mackerel resource is subject to periodic outbreaks in biomass and landings, as occurred in the 2000-2001 season. Recent surveys have indicated increasing Pacific mackerel abundance, and catches have also increased. The 2013 assessment and biomass projection also increased, suggesting that another ‘boom’ may be forthcoming. The CPSAS believes it is important to maintain the opportunity to harvest Pacific mackerel at the level recommended by the CPSMT for the 2013-14 fishery, in light of the apparent increase in biomass and potential decrease in harvest opportunity for other CPS, i.e. sardine.

In addition, the CPSAS recommends an in-season review of the 2013-2014 Pacific mackerel fishery at the April 2014 Council meeting, if needed, to consider releasing a portion of the incidental set-aside to the directed fishery.

**Moving Pacific Mackerel from Active to Monitored Status**

The CPSAS is concerned with the real-world ramifications of such a move, proposed for the 2014-15 season, particularly regarding the opportunity to maintain harvest opportunity in a stock that is characterized by rapid increases in abundance and that appears to be exhibiting an increase in biomass. The CPSAS supports the idea to manage CPS from an assemblage perspective, and understands the need to prioritize time and resources to provide the most efficient and effective management outcomes for all CPS, both active and monitored. If Pacific mackerel is moved to monitored status, the in-season review described above should be included as a management measure.

The CPSAS notes that the CPS Fishery Management Plan describes flexibility to move a stock quickly

from monitored to active status, should catches or other information warrant a move in status. This may be an important issue, if the biomass and/or catch increases rapidly.

The CPSAS supports the CPSMT's intent to consider multiple options for setting harvest control rule (HCR) levels for the monitored stock and making a recommendation to the Council at a future meeting, and notes that in setting HCR levels, there is much more information known about Pacific mackerel than known about other monitored stocks. This should be taken into consideration.

Finally, the CPSAS also encourages the Council to look forward, not backward, when considering Pacific mackerel catches as the sole or primary rationale to change management status.

PFMC  
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