

## COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) reviewed changes proposed for the Groundfish/CPS Stock Assessment Terms of Reference (ToR) (Agenda Item J.2.a, Attachment 1), as a follow-up to initial consideration and discussion at the June 2014 Council meeting (June Agenda Item F.8.a. Attachment 5) on this issue.

At that time the CPSAS expressed concern over the framework proposed for full assessments, updates and catch-only projections. Panel members noted the need for more flexibility to address the dynamics of CPS stocks, for example how to account for new recruitment in update assessments and catch-only projections. The need for more flexibility to account for recent recruitment was also identified in the stock assessment peer review discussion at the Southwest Fishery Science Center.

These issues were incorporated to a degree in the proposed ToR, but the CPSAS believes certain elements need further clarification, and therefore we support the changes recommended by the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) in its supplemental report (Agenda Item J.2.b, Supplemental CPSMT Report).

To highlight key points from the CPSMT report (specific CPSMT recommendations are underlined):

- Regarding catch-only projections, the language of ToR is unclear regarding the types of ‘catch’ data that can be included in these projections. The CPSMT presumes ‘catch’ refers to tonnage only and not the size or age composition data associated with that tonnage. The ToR should be amended to be specific in this regard. Further, the CPSAS recommends that the size and age composition data be included whenever possible.
- Catch-only projections and management advice for CPS can be strongly influenced by assumptions regarding current and future recruitment levels. This point was highlighted during the June 2014 catch-only projection analysis for Pacific mackerel, when the uncertainty resulted in a significant decline in the harvest guideline. The CPSMT hopes that this topic will be thoroughly addressed during the 2015 STAR for Pacific mackerel. The CPSAS agrees, given that management specifications for the subsequent four years will be based on such projections.
- The CPSMT notes that, under the current draft ToR, the mop-up process only applies to groundfish and not CPS stock assessments. The ToR states that in the event a CPS stock assessment is not deemed adequate for management, the assessment would be deferred for another full STAR panel the following year. The CPSMT is unclear as to what type of model estimate would be used for management advice during the interim year – and whether the previously adopted model would be appended with all new available data (i.e. ‘update’) or would it be used for a catch-only projection. The CPSAS believes this needs clarification and again, the CPSAS recommends that the size and age composition data be included whenever possible.

- Finally, since Pacific sardine are not managed with biennial harvest specifications the sentence on page 8, Section 2, Paragraph 1 should be amended as follow: *“The Council also directed that annual harvest measures for ~~Pacific sardine~~ and Pacific mackerel be implemented on a biennial basis beginning with the 2015-2016.”*

In conclusion, we appreciate efforts to acknowledge the need for more flexibility during non-assessment years. This is critically important to develop more informed management measures for dynamic CPS stocks.