

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNING

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) reviewed changes proposed for the Groundfish/CPS Stock Assessment Terms of Reference (ToR) (Agenda Item J.2.a, Attachment 1) and offers the following comments to improve clarity of the ToR.

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 draft ToR should be amended to be specific in this regard.

Catch-only projections and management advice for CPS can be strongly influenced by assumptions regarding current and future recruitment levels, particularly given the early age at recruitment to the fishery and the use of HCRs based on the age 1+ biomass. This point was highlighted during the June 2014 catch-only projection analysis for Pacific mackerel, where a number of alternative recruitment scenarios were explored. The CPSMT notes that appropriate methods for treating current/future recruitments for catch-only projections have not yet been identified by the Scientific and Statistical Committee. While the treatment of recruitments in catch-only projections does not necessarily need to be prescribed in this ToR, the CPSMT hopes that this topic will be thoroughly addressed during the 2015 Stock Assessment Review (STAR) for Pacific mackerel, 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. We presume this would be based on the previously-adopted model, but whether this model is to be appended with all new available data (i.e. ‘update’) or would it be used for a catch-only projection is unknown.

As noted in its June 2014 report, the CPSMT concurs with CPS Stock Assessment Team members that a proposed change to the deadline for stock assessment draft reports to three weeks ahead of the STAR panel review meeting is unnecessary for CPS stock assessments. Timing of availability of assessment data continues to present a challenge to the sardine STAT despite the change in management cycle. Given the onerous reporting requirements for a full stock assessment report (outlined in Appendices B and C of the ToR), the STAT should be afforded more, not less, time to conduct a thorough analysis and document it in the report.

Finally, since Pacific sardine are not managed with biennial harvest specifications the sentence on page 8, Section 2, Paragraph 1 should be amended as follows: *“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.”*