The Council is discussing how to restructure groundfish stock complexes. The draft alternatives presented at the April Council meeting, and an alternative recommended by the Council’s Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, will be analyzed further. The Council plans to adopt preliminary preferred alternatives in June. The Council prioritized restructuring the “Other Fish” and slope rockfish complexes. • Whiting: The Council set aside 2,500 metric tons of Pacific whiting to accommodate research catch and bycatch in pink shrimp fisheries. • Barotrauma: The Council changed the mortality rates it uses to manage cowcod, canary, and yelloweye rockfish when descending devices are used to prevent barotrauma. More work needs to be done before new mortality rates are adopted. • Essential fish habitat: A request for proposals to changes in essential fish habitat for groundfish will be released May 1, with proposals due to the Council July 31. • Electronic monitoring: The Council will move ahead with electronic monitoring of compliance in the trawl catch share program. Electronic monitoring will reduce the need for observer coverage. If funding is available, the Council begins exploring this issue during a scoping session at its September 2013 meeting. • Inseason adjustments: The Council adopted the recreational measures contained in the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife report for Marine Area 4 relative to cabezon and lingcod length limits and cabezon bag limits (http://tinyurl.com/dybzg9b). The Council also adopted the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area adjustments for 2013 and 2014 as noted at http://tinyurl.com/c87tucxa.

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES (SARDINES, ANCHOVIES, MACKEREL, ETC.)

The Council considered the results of a recent workshop on Pacific sardines, and may take action in two areas. First, the Council is considering using a CalCOFI temperature measurement rather than the Scripps Pier temperatures, in order to estimate sardine productivity in any given year. The CalCOFI temperature series appears to show a better relationship with sardine productivity. Second, the Council is considering changing the start date of the sardine fishery from January 1st to July 1st. Both issues are slated for final action at the June 2013 meeting.

VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS

The Council is discussing a VMS requirement for tuna vessels longer than 24 meters. This issue will be taken up in June along with consideration of changes to the declaration requirements for vessels with VMS units acquired for the groundfish fishery.

OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Tim Sippel was appointed to the Highly Migratory Species Management Team, and Dr. Ian Taylor was appointed to the Groundfish Management Team. • The Magnuson-Stevens Act, which guides fisheries management in the U.S., is due to be reauthorized soon. The Council discussed the changes it would like to see, including electronic monitoring and more flexible rebuilding plans.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Pacific Fishery Management Council will be held June 20-25 in Garden Grove, California. The September meeting will be held September 12-17 in Boise, Idaho. You can listen to Council meetings online; see our website (www.pcouncil.org). Follow the Council agenda on Twitter at @PFMCAgenda, and follow us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/PacificFisheryManagementCouncil.