

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON  
COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES FMP AMENDMENT 9: BYCATCH, SQUID MAXIMUM SUSTAINABLE  
YIELD, TRIBAL FISHING RIGHTS

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the calculation of squid maximum sustainable yield (MSY) contained in amendment 9 to the coastal pelagic species fishery management plan. The approach extrapolates historic California landings to the entire West Coast based on percentages of area fished and the coastwide distribution of squid in trawl samples. We are concerned about the accuracy of this approach. On the one hand, the extrapolation method used for California may overestimate the amount of squid, because it assumes occasionally fished areas are as productive as heavily fished areas. On the other hand, this method may underestimate the amount of squid, because it assumes that no squid occurs in areas where no fishing occurs. We also do not know how well the incidental catch of squid in various trawl surveys represents the actual distribution of squid coastwide. Because of the uncertainties surrounding these extrapolations and our ongoing concern regarding the appropriateness of defining MSY for this species, we cannot recommend an MSY value at this time.

Fortunately, research being conducted on squid life history, abundance, and distribution in California is expected to provide significant new information within the next year. We recommend that the SSC work with the National Marine Fisheries Service and California Department of Fish and Game to organize a stock assessment workshop next year to integrate the ongoing squid research in California into the Council's management plan. This workshop should also address how the concept of MSY relates to a species that is short lived and whose abundance/availability is largely environmentally determined.

For near term management purposes, the SSC discussed the known characteristics of the squid fishery with members of the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team. We made three observations about the fishery. First, it has taken place in the same areas near Monterey and in Southern California for decades. Second, catch is dramatically reduced by the occurrence of El Niños, but catches rebound rapidly from very low levels. Third, significant spawning activity takes place in areas that are not fished. Given these characteristics, we believe the resource will not be adversely affected by a delay in setting MSY until after the recommended workshop is completed.

PFMC  
09/14/00