

## COMMENTS ON SARDINE ALLOCATION FOR 2001

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met on March 9<sup>th</sup> to consider many issues. The majority (motion passed 7 to 1) of the CPSAS makes the following two recommendations:

1. The Council should ask the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) and CPSAS to begin the process of analyzing the current allocation scheme for its appropriateness and draft options for potential changes to the allocation scheme if warranted. The CPSAS believes that in the long-run a system must be identified and implemented that benefits all users in the fishery.
2. For the 2001 season change the re-allocation date set forth in the fishery management plan (FMP) from 9 months following the start of the sardine season to 7 months following the start of the season. Instead of reallocating all unused quota on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the CPSAS believes that the reallocation should occur on August 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a short-term fix for the 2001 season and an appropriate move to prevent possibly precluding one geographic user group from participating in this valuable fishery during their usual season.

### BACKGROUND

In February of 2000 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife asked the CPSMT to analyze whether a separate harvest guideline or quota for sardine fisheries north of California was needed. The perception was that the northern California fishery could potentially preclude Oregon and Washington fishing opportunities if the allocation was fully utilized prior to the northern states beginning their fishing seasons. The CPSMT analyzed the situation and reported to the Council in June of 2000. The CPSMT recommendation was to defer any consideration of establishing a separate quota, because the coastal pelagic species (CPS) FMP had been only recently implemented. The CPSMT further recommended the Council continue with the current plan, at least through the first year, to see if any allocation problems would be identified.

As the industry continued to develop in Oregon and Washington, it became apparent there was a possibility for an additional allocation problem. Amendment 8 outlines the current allocation scheme for sardine as two-thirds of the harvest guideline available for the south (Pt. Piedras Blancas, California to the Mexican border) and one-third for the north (north of Pt. Piedras Blancas to the Canadian border, including Oregon and Washington). For 2001, the 134,737 metric ton harvest guideline is allocated 44,912 metric tons to the north, and 89,825 metric tons to the south. The FMP also provides a reallocation (50/50 to north and south) of unused quota after nine months from the start of the fishery (October 1). The northern states begin their seasons (May or June) prior to northern California (August or September). Oregon and Washington continue to increase their processing capacity which indicates the real possibility that in 2001 the northern harvest guideline could be significantly utilized by Washington and Oregon before northern California begins their season later in the summer.

At the November 2000 Council meeting the CPSAS recommended to the Council that the allocation scheme outlined in Amendment 8 should be suspended for 2001 and be replaced with a coast-wide quota. The CPSAS also recommended that the process for outlining options for future management and allocation schemes should be started. There was public comment provided by industry members to the same effect. The Council chose at that time not to suspend the current allocation.

As Washington and Oregon continue to gear up for the upcoming season, concern persists by many industry members that Monterey fishermen could be precluded from their share of the allocation by the northern states. Estimates of 30,000 tons of sardine being landed in Washington and Oregon combined continue to be made. Hence, the CPSAS once again recommends the Council consider implementing an alternative to the allocation scheme outlined in the FMP.