

DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES
Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel

Pacific Fishery Management Council
Red Lion Hotel Sacramento
Comstock 2 Room
1401 Arden Way
Sacramento, CA 95815
(916) 922-8041
March 13, 2002

Members in Attendance

Mr. Orlando Amoroso, Purse Seine Owners of San Pedro
Ms. Terry Hoinsky, Fishermen's Union
Mr. Eugene Law, Oregon fisherman
Mr. A. Pierre Marchand, Jr., Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company
Ms. Heather Munro, Munro Consulting
Ms Karen Reyna, Pacific Ocean Conservation Network
Mr. John Royal, Chair
Mr. Paul Strasser, Sportfishing Representative

Others in Attendance

Ms. Jennifer Gilden, Council Staff
Dr. Kevin Hill, Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team
Mr. Jim Morgan, National Marine Fisheries Service
Mr. Steve Franklin, Fisherman
Mr. Dave Franklin, Fisherman
Mr. Dan Waldeck, Council Staff

The draft agenda was approved.

Meeting Summary

Election of Officers

Mr. Royal and Ms. Munro were re-elected chair and vice-chair, respectively.

Pacific Mackerel

Mr. Morgan, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), reported the directed fishery for Pacific mackerel closed November 21, 2001. An incidental allowance of 45% has been in place since then. Currently, about 7,300 mt of the 13,837 mt Pacific mackerel harvest guideline for 2001-2002 had been landed, and about 6,500 mt remained. Given the rate of fishing and the amount of harvest guideline remaining, NMFS could re-open the directed fishery.

Dr. Hill, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), distributed a handout detailing landings of Pacific mackerel. Landings have been low since the directed fishery was closed. He suggested the industry has the capacity for a mop-up fishery, but the amount landed will depend on market orders. It would be acceptable to re-open the directed fishery. It is likely total landings for the season will be below the harvest guideline.

Generally, the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) was satisfied with the performance of the season structure for Pacific mackerel. Prior to the June 2002 Council meeting, the CPSAS and Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) will plan the structure for the 2002-2003 season, improvements will be made based on the performance of the 2001-2002 season. An issue for consideration will be mixed Pacific mackerel and Pacific sardine catches.

Ms. Munro indicated she would put together information on markets, which will be useful in developing the season structure. Last year, industry input was very helpful in developing the season structure. For the coming season, the CPSAS will explore with their constituents how best to structure the direct fishery and incidental allowance.

The CPSAS discussed whether to recommend re-opening the directed Pacific mackerel fishery prior to the end of the 2001-2002 season. It was decided that the CPSAS would provide a report to the Council requesting NMFS re-open the directed fishery no later than April 1, 2002.

CPSAS Comments on NMFS Report

The CPSAS would like to recommend that NMFS trigger an automatic action to reopen the directed pacific mackerel fishery. Further, the CPSAS recommends this fishery begin no later than April 1st. The Council is not slated to discuss the mop-up fishery until the April meeting. However, given the mackerel landings to date, and the amount of harvest guideline which has not been landed, the CPSAS believes there is urgency to beginning the mop-up fishery as soon as possible. Due to time constraints, if NMFS waits until after the April council meeting to begin this process, it will likely be May before the mop-up fishery begins. Beginning the process prior to the April Council meeting will ensure that the industry has a higher probability of harvesting the majority of the harvest guideline available.

Amendment 10

Dr. Hill gave a background presentation on Amendment 10 to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) fishery management plan (FMP). He reviewed the capacity-related alternatives and the market squid maximum sustainable yield (MSY) alternatives. He highlighted the current preferred alternatives and noted areas where preferred alternatives have not yet been identified by the Council.

The CPSAS discussed the use of gross registered tonnage (GRT) as a measure of vessel and fleet capacity. Operational aspects of the permit transfer provisions were also discussed. Several of the topics discussed had been thoroughly aired at past meetings. Based on the advice of the CPSMT and CPSAS, the Council previously selected preferred alternatives for a capacity goal and transferability allowance (i.e., transfer to equal gross tonnage + 10%). These preferred alternatives and the rationale for why they are preferred are discussed and analyzed in Amendment 10. It was noted that there will be time to review and comment on all aspects of Amendment 10 during the public review period.

Next, Dr. Hill reviewed the MSY proxy approach developed for market squid. It was noted that this information had been previously reviewed and approved by the CPSAS. The CPSAS continues to support the squid workshop findings and CPSMT recommendations. A minority of the CPSAS offered up language for an additional alternative.

A member of the public commented on the Amendment 10 capacity-related issues. His questions revolved around the number of times a permit could be transferred and to whom a permit could be transferred.

CPSAS Comments on Amendment 10

The CPSAS heard a presentation from CPSMT Chairman Kevin Hill reviewing the draft document of Amendment 10 to the CPS FMP. The majority (7 of 8) of the CPSAS agree the draft represents a reasonable range of alternatives for issues relative to limited entry fleet capacity management and an MSY control rule for squid. The majority of the CPSAS believe the document is adequate for public review and recommends the Council send out the document for public review and comment.

Minority Report

Although the CPSAS was unanimous in agreeing that a reasonable range of alternatives exists for issues relative to limited entry fleet capacity, the minority opinion believes that for squid MSY, Alternative 4, the preferred alternative needs an additional sub-option. It is proposed that this sub-option use the same model as Alternative 4, but include an egg escapement threshold of 0.4 (40%). This is a reasonable alternative to consider because of (1) the environmental concerns from the rapid increase of its catches, (2) the fisheries propensity to crash during El Niño events, (3) its importance to the ecosystem as a prey species, and (4) since 0.4 (40%) is used as the threshold in the Falkland Islands fishery.

Other Business

Pacific Sardine Allocation

The CPSAS discussed allocation of the annual sardine harvest guideline and timing of the automatic re-allocation. Many different opinions were expressed about the issues involved and the whether changing the current policy is necessary. Of concern is preemption of the Monterey, California fishery by the Oregon and Washington fisheries due to the different timing of these fisheries.

The consensus was to thoroughly discuss this topic at the next CPSAS meeting. One specific issue is changing the re-allocation date, which is currently nine months after the start of the Pacific sardine fishery (i.e., fishery starts January 1, re-allocation occurs October 1). Ms. Munro highlighted that she had previously developed and distributed a white paper on this subject. She suggested the CPSAS members read the document and familiarize themselves with the issues.

Sea Surface Temperature and Pacific Sardine Harvest Guideline Control Rule.

The issue of the role of sea surface temperature (SST) in the formula for determining the sardine harvest guideline was discussed. It is feared that if SST continues to trend downward, the harvest guideline could be severely curtailed. This issue will be discussed more thoroughly at the next CPSAS meeting.

Tri-national Sardine Forum

The November 2001 meeting of the Tri-national Sardine Forum was discussed. Concern was expressed that the cooperative research envisioned by the Forum is not developing. Of particular concern, is lack of information from Mexico on CPS fisheries in their region. The CPSAS discussed the critical need for improvements to coastwide Pacific sardine research.

Update on Viral Hemorrhagic Septicaemia

Dr. Hill briefed the CPSAS on the latest news about viral hemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) virus occurring in West Coast populations of Pacific sardine. The virus first appeared in the North Pacific and the Pacific Northwest. It has been detected in several species including herring, pollock, hake, Pacific cod, sablefish. More recently, it has been found in sardine and mackerel from landings into the San Pedro area.

Outbreaks of the virus typically occur when fish are under stress. The virus eats away at tissues and can cause mass mortalities. There is not a concern the entire West Coast sardine population could die off. Although mass mortalities have occurred (in British Columbia in 1998 or 1999). These mass die offs occurred during periods of extremely cold (relative to sardine) water temperatures.

The principle concern is the potential for a quarantine imposed by the Australian government, which is currently doing a risk assessment.

In the mid-1990s, Australian fisheries experienced mass mortalities concurrent with the growth of the bluefin tuna pen industry. The die-offs were attributed to a different virus, but awareness of these types of environmental concerns is heightened. At that time, there was a temporary ban on imports.

An Australian quarantine would be a significant blow to the West Coast sardine industry. Currently, Australia is going through a public comment period on the topic of importing fish from areas where VHS has been detected. A final decision is expected by mid-April 2002. The CPSMT will continue to track the issue and keep the Council and CPSAS informed.

PFMC
06/05/02