

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
DRAFT REGULATORY AMENDMENT AND ANALYSIS FOR CHANGES TO SARDINE
ALLOCATION

Dr. Sam Herrick briefed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on the alternatives for an interim Pacific sardine allocation formula and the analysis of these alternatives. A status quo and eight other alternatives were considered, based on the choice of a north/south boundary, the initial allocation between the northern and southern subareas, the date of the re-allocation of any remaining optimum yield (OY) between these subareas, the split between these areas at the re-allocation, and the date of a coastwide allocation. The nine alternatives were reduced to four by the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) based on feasibility, equitability, the full utilization of the annual OY, the estimated change in net national benefits, and the probability of one of the fishing sectors having to close prematurely.

The allocation formula being considered is only expected to be used for two years (2003 and 2004) with plans to replace it by a formula that takes fuller account of biological and economic factors. The SSC noted that analysis of a long-term allocation formula should make use of the results of the sardine surveys that are planned to start in 2003. These surveys should provide information regarding biomass levels off Oregon and Washington relative to those off California. The analysis of future alternatives should also be based on economic data collected from designed surveys rather than voluntary information and attempt to incorporate the impacts of the seasonal variability in landings.

The SSC notes that all of the alternatives would increase harvest opportunities off Oregon and Washington. However, these alternatives are only designed to avoid the problems encountered in 2002; future analyses may identify other alternatives. The SSC, therefore, cautions that the alternatives under consideration for 2003 and 2004 should not be interpreted as a signal that the Oregon and Washington fisheries can continue to expand and suggests the current number of state permits for the Oregon/Washington-based sectors be frozen until a long-term allocation formula is selected.