

PACIFIC SARDINE STOCK ASSESSMENT AND HARVEST GUIDELINE FOR 2004

Situation: Per the coastal pelagic species (CPS) fishery management plan (FMP) annual cycle, the Council is scheduled to review the Pacific sardine stock assessment and adopt a recommendation to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce for a harvest guideline for the 2004 Pacific sardine fishing season. The current harvest guideline (which expires December 31, 2003) is 110,908 mt (based on a biomass estimate of 999,871 mt). The most recent (2003) stock assessment and 2004 harvest guideline recommendation are summarized in Exhibit H.2, Attachment 1.

Per the revised allocation framework, the fishery opens on January 1 and the harvest guideline is initially allocated 33% to the northern subarea (Subarea A) and 66% to the southern subarea (Subarea B). On September 1, unharvested sardine is reallocated, 20% to Subarea A and 80% to Subarea B. All unharvested sardine that remain on December 1 are pooled and made available coast wide. The dividing line between the two areas is Point Arena, California (39° N latitude).

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), CPS Management Team (CPSMT), and the CPS Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) have reviewed the assessment and the recommended harvest guideline. They will present their respective advice to the Council.

In setting the harvest guideline for 2004, the Council might consider including incidental catch allowances, which would provide for incidental landings of Pacific sardine in CPS fisheries. Incidental allowances could be necessary if a subarea were closed to directed fishing and sardine landings could potentially occur in another CPS fishery, e.g., Pacific mackerel. The FMP provides for incidental catch allowances up to 45% of landed weight.

Council Action:

1. Adopt Pacific Sardine Harvest Guideline for 2004.

Reference Materials:

1. Exhibit H.2, Attachment 1 – Status of the Pacific Sardine Resource and Fishery in 2003 with Management Recommendations for 2004.
2. Exhibit H.2.b, CPSMT Report.
3. Exhibit H.2.b, CPSAS Report.
4. Exhibit H.2.b, Supplemental SSC Report.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Pacific Sardine Harvest Guideline for 2004

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