

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
PACIFIC SARDINE STOCK ASSESSMENT AND HARVEST GUIDELINE FOR 2004

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met October 14, 2003 in La Jolla, California. At the meeting, the CPSAS heard a presentation from Dr. Ray Conser reviewing the current Pacific sardine stock assessment and the recommended harvest guideline of 122,747 mt for the 2004 fishery. The CPSAS unanimously agrees the stock assessment is as complete as the best available science and the current model allows. The CPSAS supports the recommended harvest guideline, which is based on the formula defined in the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The CPSAS is anxious to transition to the new model, which will more completely incorporate fishery dependent and fishery independent data from the Pacific Northwest fisheries. Furthermore, the CPSAS continues to support the need for coastwide surveys of the sardine resource. The CPSAS recommends the Council encourage National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to continue to fund comprehensive CPS research, including the survey off the Pacific Northwest.

The CPSAS agrees with the CPSMT that coordinated international management of CPS fisheries is needed. Moreover, the CPSAS also agrees that inclusion of complete Mexican catch statistics is vital to the CPS assessment process. In April of 2003, the Council sent a letter to the U.S. Department of State (DOS) requesting attention to these matters, specifically for the initiation of formal discussions with the government of Mexico. The CPSAS is disappointed that the Council has not received a response from the DOS and by the apparent lack of attention to the Council request. The CPSAS recommends the Council request a response from the DOS, as well as NMFS, about this matter.

As described by the CPSMT, the Tri-National Sardine Forum has been a very positive experience. The CPSAS recommends the Council continue their involvement in the Sardine Forum. As noted by the CPSMT, the Sardine Forum provides a means for scientists from U.S. and Mexico to collaborate informally. However, the CPSAS continues to strongly recommend that formal cooperative management and data sharing arrangements are necessary. Thus, the CPSAS recommends the Council vigorously engage the DOS in seeking better cooperation from the Mexican government.

PFMC
10/21/03