

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP) AMENDMENT–SARDINE ALLOCATION

Situation: The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to consider initiation of an amendment to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to address annual allocation of the Pacific sardine harvest guideline.

In April 2003, the Council adopted an interim framework for allocating sardine. The revised allocation system:

- (1) changed the definition of Subarea A and Subarea B by moving the geographic boundary between the two areas from 35° 40' N latitude (Point Piedras Blancas) to 39° N latitude (Point Arena),
- (2) moved the date when Pacific sardine that remains unharvested is reallocated to Subarea A and Subarea B from October 1 to September 1,
- (3) changed the percentage of the unharvested sardine that is reallocated to Subarea A and Subarea B from 50% to both subareas to 20% to Subarea A and 80% to Subarea B, and
- (4) reallocates all unharvested sardine that remains on December 1 coast wide.

The Council requested this allocation framework be in place for the 2003 and 2004 fishing seasons, and also in 2005 if the 2005 harvest guideline is at least 90% of the 2003 harvest guideline. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) implemented the revised allocation framework on September 4, 2003 (Exhibit F.3.a, Attachment 1).

The Council took this action in response to concern that the previous allocation framework did not provide optimal harvest opportunity to the various fishing sectors. Concern was also expressed that the previous allocation hindered optimal use of the available harvest. For example:

Year	Harvest Guideline (mt)	Coastwide Landings (mt)
2000	186,791	67,984
2001	134,737	75,719
2002	118,442	102,403
Post revised allocation		
2003	110,908	74,895

To address these concerns in the short-term, the interim allocation framework was rapidly developed using the best available information, with the understanding that more information and time would be needed to develop a more comprehensive, longer-term allocation framework. However, as shown above, in 2003, under the revised allocation framework, the harvest guideline was not achieved. Hence, some industry participants continue to express concern about the need for developing a long-term allocation framework, specifically to help ensure the annual harvest guideline is achieved.

More recently, NMFS has informed the Council of several other FMP-related issues that might need to be addressed through amendment of the CPS FMP (Exhibit F.1.a, Attachment 1). These issues include FMP harvest control rules, compatibility between California's proposed market squid FMP and the Council's CPS FMP, market squid overfishing definitions, CPS FMP bycatch provisions and pilot at-sea observer program, CPS essential fish habitat, and five-year review of the CPS FMP.

The CPS Management Team and CPS Advisory Subpanel have been briefed on the letter from NMFS and the scheduled Council action. These committees will report their recommendations to the Council, which are provided in Exhibit F.3.b, CPSMT Report and CPSAS Report.

Based on this advice and guidance from NMFS, the Council should consider if and how to proceed with developing an amendment to the CPS FMP.

Council Task:

1. Council Guidance on Initiation of an FMP Amendment.

Reference Materials:

1. Exhibit F.3.a, Attachment 1: Sardine Allocation Final Rule, September 4, 2003.
2. Exhibit F.3.b, CPSMT Report.
3. Exhibit F.3.b, CPSAS Report.
4. Exhibit F.3.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. Council Guidance on Initiation of an FMP Amendment

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