

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT--SARDINE ALLOCATION

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) received information from Council staff about scheduled Council action related to sardine allocation. The CPSAS also received a report from NMFS about several CPS fishery management plan (FMP)-related issues that could be addressed through amendment of the CPS FMP (May 18, 2004 -- McInnis Letter). The NMFS letter notes that sardine allocation is the "top priority." However, the letter also urges the Council to "consider the full range of possible alternatives." Thus, it is unclear to the CPSAS if NMFS considers the issues raised in the letter more urgent than sardine allocation.

The CPSAS considers development of a long-term allocation framework for the sardine fishery to be the highest priority CPS FMP issue. Therefore, the CPSAS recommends the Council move forward with developing an FMP amendment to address sardine allocation. Final Council action on sardine allocation should occur no later than June 2005 to enable implementation in time for the 2006 sardine fishery.

However, if NMFS considers the issues raised in the May 18 letter more urgent than allocation, and that a more comprehensive FMP amendment is warranted, NMFS should clarify for the Council this urgency and work with the Council, CPSMT, and CPSAS to plan and schedule a more comprehensive FMP amendment. If this path is taken, the Council should prepare for the high likelihood that implementation of a revised sardine allocation would not occur in time for the 2006 sardine fishery.

To reiterate, the CPSAS believes allocation is the highest priority and, if directed by the Council, commits to cooperatively develop a practicable range of sardine allocation alternatives. The CPSAS acknowledges that issues raised by NMFS should be reviewed to see if more comprehensive changes to the FMP are needed. However, this review should not jeopardize final Council action on the sardine allocation FMP amendment by June 2005. If issues raised by NMFS could be addressed concurrent to sardine allocation without jeopardizing the schedule, the Council should consider including these issues in the sardine allocation FMP amendment.

PFMC  
05/25/04