

FMP AMENDMENT 11--SARDINE ALLOCATION

The Council is working to implement a comprehensive, long-term allocation framework to apportion the annual Pacific sardine harvest guideline among the various sectors of the sardine fishery. The resulting Amendment 11 to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) is intended to achieve optimal utilization of the resource and equitable allocation of harvest opportunity.

The original Pacific sardine allocation formula, implemented in the CPS FMP in 1998, was incorporated into Federal management from existing California State law and was designed to balance fishing opportunity between the Southern California-based fishery and the Monterey-based fishery. As the Pacific sardine biomass expanded, fisheries developed in the Pacific Northwest and Oregon and Washington fishery interests expressed concern to the Council that the original allocation framework did not provide optimal harvest opportunity. In 2003, the Council recommended and NMFS implemented an interim framework for allocating Pacific sardine for the 2003 and 2004 fishing seasons, and also in 2005 if the 2005 harvest guideline was at least 90% of the 2003 harvest guideline. At the time, it was understood that more information and time would be needed to develop a more comprehensive, longer-term allocation framework, which is why the proposed action is needed. On July 12, 2004, the Council published a notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider and evaluate the impacts to the human environment of long term allocation. However, the Council and NMFS have determined that an EIS may not be necessary and have prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) (Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 1). Section 1.2 of the EA provides additional information on the history of Pacific sardine allocation and the need for the proposed action.

As with the interim allocation framework, this proposed action is not anticipated to have significant biological impacts to Pacific sardine but may have significant impacts to salmon stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act. Moreover, the proposed action may have significant economic and social impacts associated with harvest opportunities between fishery sectors and attainment of the harvest guideline. The EA will examine the significance of these impacts to determine if it is necessary to prepare an EIS. If the analysis of the proposed action in the EA shows no significant impacts, NMFS and the Council will prepare a full EA and FONSI. (A Federal Register notice would be published when the EA is completed to notify the public of the decision not to prepare an EIS.) If significant impacts are predicted, NMFS and the Council will reaffirm their original intent to prepare an EIS; a draft EIS (DEIS) would then be published after the June Council meeting, commencing the public comment period.

The Council will hear reports from NMFS, as well as receive advice from the Council advisory bodies and the public, and adopt a preferred alternative for allocation of the Pacific sardine harvest guideline.

Council Action: Adopt a Final Preferred Alternative for Sardine Allocation.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2.b, Attachment 1: *Draft Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review & Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, Allocation of the Pacific Sardine Harvest Guideline, Amendment 11 to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan.*
2. Agenda Item F.2.d, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

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| a. | Agenda Item Overview | Mike Burner |
| b. | CPSMT Report | Sam Herrick |
| c. | Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies | |
| d. | Public Comment | |
| e. | Council Action: Adopt a Final Preferred Alternative for Sardine Allocation | |

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