

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
PACIFIC MACKEREL HARVEST GUIDELINE FOR 2007-2008

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) heard a report from Dr. Emmanis Dorval and Dr. Kevin Hill of the Pacific Mackerel Stock Assessment Team regarding the Pacific mackerel stock assessment and proposed harvest guideline (HG) for the 2007-2008 season. The CPSAS thanks and commends Dr. Dorval, Dr. Hill, and the Pacific Mackerel Assessment Team for their dedication and hard work in developing the recommendation.

The CPSAS agrees with the assessment team and the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) that this assessment is based on the best available science. However, the CPSAS strongly recommends the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) actively engage in serious negotiations with the U.S. State Department to obtain essential Pacific mackerel and Pacific sardine biological data from Mexico.

Based on the current assessment and harvest control rule for Pacific mackerel, the acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the 2007-2008 is estimated to be 71,629 metric tons (mt). The CPSAS concurs with the CPSMT recommendation to set an HG below the ABC. The CPSAS recommends setting an HG of 40,000 mt, leaving a substantial buffer between the HG and the ABC as a precautionary measure.

The CPSAS further recommends that the Council provide guidance to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that, in the event the directed fishery reaches 40,000 mt, NMFS close the directed fishery and revert to an incidental-catch-only fishery. Under this incidental-catch-only fishery, the CPSAS recommends a 45% incidental catch allowance when Pacific mackerel are landed with other coastal pelagic species (CPS), except that up to 1 mt of Pacific mackerel could be landed without landing any other CPS.

The CPSAS recommends an in-season review of the mackerel season for the March 2008 Council meeting, if needed, with the possibility of re-opening the directed fishery as a routine action.

PFMC
05/23/07