

## EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT (EFP) FOR SARDINE RESEARCH

At its November 2008 meeting, the Council adopted harvest specifications and management measures for the 2009 Pacific sardine survey. As part of the management measures the Council set aside 1,200 metric tons (mt) of the 2009 harvest guideline (HG) as a research set aside. The intent of the research set aside is to continue and expand on a pilot aerial survey that was conducted in 2008 by industry representatives in the Pacific Northwest (PNW). No research set aside was adopted for the 2008 pilot survey which was conducted during the directed fishery. The 2008 Pacific sardine fishery experienced early HG attainment and fishery closures which made for less than ideal conditions for conducting research. In response, the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Advisory Bodies advised improving the potential for additional research in 2009 by setting aside a portion of the 2009 HG for research that can be conducted, at least in part, outside of the directed fishery. Because this activity is proposed to happen during an otherwise closed period, and exempted fishing permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service will likely be required.

The pilot survey conducted in 2008 was limited to areas in the PNW. Expanding the geographic scope of the survey is of interest to both the scientific and fishing communities. Industry representatives from California as well as the PNW have been working to develop a program to achieve this expansion of new research. Two similar proposals for 2009 research have been submitted for Council and Advisory Body consideration in March, one by Northwest Sardine Survey, LLC (Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1) and one by the California Wetfish Producers Association (Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 2). While there is general similarity between these two proposals, areas of difference include recommended geographic distribution of the research set aside and hydroacoustic sampling techniques and equipment. Additionally, opinions differ on whether the survey methods employed in the PNW in 2008 and proposed for 2009 can be replicated in California.

At the March meeting the Council is tasked with adopting a proposal for 2009 Pacific sardine research for public review. Detailed survey designs for this proposed research are scheduled for review by the May Stock Assessment Review Panel meeting as well as the June meeting of the Scientific and Statistical Committee. National Marine Fisheries Service will likely publish a public notice announcing its intent to consider exempted fishing permits for the proposed research in advance of the June Council meeting where the Council is scheduled to make final recommendation on whether the proposed research should be conducted and whether an exempting fishing permit should be considered for issuance. Should the exempted fishing permits be denied and the proposed research not occur outside of the directed fishery, the 1,200 mt set aside is scheduled to be reallocated to the third period (September 15-December 31) as adopted by the Council in November 2008 and implemented in regulation by NMFS.

### **Council Action:**

**Adopt Exempted Fishing Permit for Public Review.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1: West Coast Sardine Survey, Justification for an Exempted Fishing Permit in 2009.
2. Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 2: California Aerial and Acoustic Sardine Survey, Justification for an Exempted Fishing Permit in 2009.
3. Agenda Item C.2.b, Supplemental SSC Report.
4. Agenda Item C.2.b, Supplemental CPSMT Report.
5. Agenda Item C.2.b, Supplemental CPSAS Report.
6. Agenda Item C.2.c, Public Comment 1: February 18, 2009 letter to Mr. Mike Burner from Mr. Jerry Thon, Northwest Sardine Survey, LLC.
7. Agenda Item C.2.c, Public Comment 2: February 18, 2009 letter to Mr. Don Hansen and Dr. Donald McIsaac from Ms. Diane Pleschner-Steele, California Wetfish Producers Association.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Agencies and Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt EFP for Public Review

Mike Burner

PFMC  
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