

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON  
PACIFIC MACKEREL HARVEST GUIDELINE FOR 2009-2010

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) met June 15, 2009, to review the latest stock assessment of Pacific mackerel. In 2009, a full assessment for Pacific mackerel was conducted and reviewed by a Stock Assessment Review (STAR) Panel in La Jolla, California May 4-8, 2009. The CPSMT heard presentations by Dr. Paul Crone of the Stock Assessment Team (STAT) and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) representative Dr. Owen Hamel. The CPSMT supports conclusions from the Pacific mackerel stock assessment and STAR Panel. For the 2009-2010 management season, the CPSMT further recommends the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopt the resulting acceptable biological catch (ABC) associated with the harvest control rule stipulated in the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan. Based on a total stock biomass estimate of 282,049 mt, the ABC for U.S. fisheries is 55,408 mt.

The CPSMT agrees with the STAR Panel and SSC conclusions that the merits of an alternative model provides a better understanding of the uncertainty associated with this stock assessment. In this context, as was done for the previous two assessments, the CPSMT recommends setting a harvest guideline (HG) lower than the ABC. The CPSMT recommends setting the HG at 30,000 mt as a conservative strategy to address the uncertainty, while also providing stability within the fishery. It is important to note that recent U.S. annual landings have been well below the established HGs for the directed fishery.

The CPSMT agrees to the research and data needs identified by the STAT, STAR, and SSC. To accomplish identified research efforts a review of the assessment cycle will be necessary, i.e., less frequent assessments will enable scientists to address research priorities. To improve future assessments for Pacific mackerel the CPSMT recommends:

- better research collaboration with Mexico and Canada,
- enhance monitoring of the Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel fleet and related recreational fisheries,
- re-evaluation of California Cooperative Oceanic Fisheries Investigations (CalCOFI) survey and other fishery-independent and dependent data,
- increase support for current port sampling and laboratory analysis programs, and
- begin formal research on related coastal pelagic species to address an ecosystem-based management approach.