

Sardine Allocation Background Paper  
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This background paper on the sardine allocation was prepared for use by the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel for review. The discussion regarding the coast-wide sardine allocation will be on the agenda at the September meeting in Portland.

This paper covers the following:

1. Brief history of current allocation
2. Harvest Guideline for the 2001 season
3. Changes in the sardine fishery during recent years
4. Potential Problems with current allocation system
5. Sardine season and stock availability to geographic areas
6. Recommendations (past and current)

1. Brief history of allocation

In 1999 the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) gained authority for management of the sardine fishery after Amendment 8 to the Northern Anchovy Plan was officially approved and implemented. Prior to 1999 the sardine fishery was primarily managed by California's Department of Fish & Game (Department), with some technical assistance from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

In the mid-eighties when annual quotas for sardine were relatively small, a processor from Monterey appealed to the Department to set aside a certain amount of quota for northern California fishers. The rationale for the allocation was based on the fact that the industry in San Pedro was able to catch the quota before fish were available on the northern California fishing grounds. The appeal was considered and the allocation was granted. One-third of the total California sardine quota was allocated to boats operating north of San Simeon Point, and two thirds was allocated to boats operating to the south. On October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, the total remaining state-wide quota was allocated 50-50 to the northern and southern areas.

When Amendment 8 (CPS Plan) was being written, the CPS Plan Development Team (Team) and the CPS Advisory Subpanel (Panel) considered the allocation process that was put in place by the Department. The Team and the Panel recommended leaving the allocation in place, but moving the northern boundary from the California / Oregon border north to the Canadian Border. At that time, sardine fishing occurred primarily off the state of California. However, the FMP called for a coast-wide harvest guideline. Coast-wide referring to California, Oregon and

Washington. Simply moving the boundary north seemed logical at the time because no one had considered that sardine fisheries off of the states of Oregon and Washington were strong possibilities.

The language from the FMP (Amendment 8) is as follows:

*5.2 North-South Allocation for Directed Fishery*

*This FMP authorizes allocations of Pacific sardine harvest guideline to participants by northern and southern areas (defined below) Nothing in this FMP precludes additional allocations based on other geographic areas or other factors developed under the authority of this FMP.*

*5.2.1 Definition of Northern and Southern Fishery Segments*

*The division between northern and southern areas for the U.S. Pacific sardine fishery is Point Piedras Blancas (35°40' N latitude). Landings (or catches if their location is known) north of Point Piedras Blancas and south of 39° N latitude apply to the northern area. U.S. landings (or catches if their location is known) south of Point Piedras Blancas apply to the southern area.*

*5.2.2 Formulas for Allocating Pacific Sardine*

*The northern area allocation is 33% of the Pacific sardine harvest guideline, and the southern area allocation is 66% of the Pacific sardine harvest guideline. Nine months after the start of the fishing season, any uncaught portion of the harvest guideline will be totaled and reallocated with 50% of the total allocated to the northern area and 50% of the total allocated to the southern fishery area. Reallocation will be carried out by the NMFS Regional Administrator as an automatic measure as described in Section 2.1.*

The Final Rule published in the Federal Register on December 15, 1999 define the areas further: Subarea A covers that portion of the EEZ between the U.S.-Canada Provisional International Boundary and Pt. Piedras Blancas, California (35°40'00" N. lat); Subarea B covers that portion of the EEZ between Pt. Piedras Blancas, California, and the U.S.-Mexico International Boundary.

2. Harvest Guideline for the 2001 season

The Pacific sardine fishing season begins on January 1 and concludes on December 31, or prior to the end of the year if the harvest guideline is reached.

The coast-wide harvest guideline for the Pacific sardine fishery for 2001 is 134,737 metric tons. The northern allocation is 44,912 metric tons; the southern allocation is 89,825 metric tons. Nine months after the start of the fishery, on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the NMFS Regional Administrator will reallocate all unused resource from either area between the two areas. This is done to help ensure that the optimum yield will be achieved (Federal Register, December 27, 2000).

### 3. Changes in the sardine fishery during recent years

Sardine availability in recent years off the coasts of Oregon and Washington has allowed for small commercial fisheries to take place off of these states. Both Oregon and Washington are managing these fisheries separately. However, all fish landed into either state is subtracted from the coast-wide federal harvest guideline. Both Washington and Oregon begin their seasons around the beginning of June.

The following table summarizes the landings in both states from 1999 through the present.

Total Landings for Oregon & Washington

Year	Oregon Landings	Washington Landings	Total
1999	775.7 mt	0	775.7 mt
2000	9,524 mt	4,791 mt	14,315 mt
2001	8,399 mt*	6,700 mt**	15,099 mt

\* As of August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001

\*\* As of August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2001

#### ***Oregon***

Oregon's fishery is managed under the Developmental Fishery program. While Oregon does not place a cap on the amount of fish that can be caught, the number of permits that may be issued is limited. For 2001 twenty permits were issued. As of August 18<sup>th</sup>, 8,399 metric tons of sardine had been landed into Oregon ports.

#### ***Washington***

Washington's fishery is managed under regulations for a trial commercial fishery. These regulations prevent the state from limiting participation in the fishery through number of permits issued. However, the regulations do allow the state to place a cap on the amount of fish that may be landed. For 2001 the state has set a "harvest guideline" of 15,000 metric tons. This number was computed by taking approximately one-third of the northern allocation of the coast-wide quota (44,912 metric tons).

### 4. Potential Problems with current allocation system

During the year 2000, concerns were raised by the state of Oregon that perhaps the Northern California fishery would preclude the Oregon fishery from taking place. The fear was that Monterey fishermen would catch the available quota before Oregon fishermen had access to the fish on the Oregon fishing grounds. At that time, the Council directed the Management Team to analyze whether or not this potential problem existed. The Team did the analysis and presented

its findings to the Council later in the year. The Team discovered that the exact opposite situation was potentially more likely than the one Oregon was concerned with. Historically, when there was sardine fishing in Oregon (in the 1940's) the fish were available to the fishery beginning in late Spring and early Summer. Sardine generally do not become available to the Monterey fishery until well into the Fall. Depending on conditions and markets there was the potential that Monterey fishermen could be precluded from fishing if the Oregon and Washington fisheries caught the available northern quota prior to fish showing up in Monterey Bay.

5. Sardine season and stock availability to geographic areas

The Pacific sardine season is set from January 1 to December 31, or until the quota is reached, at which time the season would close. However, fish are available at different geographic areas at different times during the season. Sources report that sardines are generally available in Southern California through out the year, but that fishermen tend to switch over to squid fishing during the spring and summer months. Other sources report that although landings were made in June in both Oregon and Washington during 2001, that the fish were of such poor quality that in the future season won't begin prior to July 15<sup>th</sup>.

The following table lists months when the sardine are generally available and may be in a high-quality condition that is marketable.

Area	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
So. CA	X	X	X	X						X	X	X
N. CA	X	X	X							X	X	X
Oregon						X	X	X	X			
Washington						X	X	X	X			

6. Past and future recommendations

The 2001 season is a good example of the potential problems that can accompany the current allocation scheme. In this situation there is a northern harvest guideline of 44,912 metric tons. That guideline applies to the northern California area (Monterey), Oregon and Washington. Those involved with the fishery in Oregon and Washington have made significant investments in the harvesting and processing infrastructures in those states. It has been estimated that approximately 30,000 tons of sardine will be landed between Oregon and California during the 2001 season. Because the Washington and Oregon fisheries occur prior to the Monterey fishery, there is a chance that the Monterey fishery could be somewhat precluded by the northern states. San Pedro has an allocation of 89,000 metric tons that will not (and cannot) be completely utilized. It makes logical sense that if the allocation is to remain in place then the re-allocation date should be set earlier. By adjusting the reallocation date to an earlier time there will be no

economic hardship or fishery disruption to anyone in any of the geographical areas involved with the sardine fishery. However, by delaying the re-allocation, even by one month, economic hardship could burden northern California participants.

In the past, recommendations to the council asking for a suspended allocation or an earlier re-allocation date have not been approved.

### **Recommendation**

There is a large sardine quota currently in place. All indications are that the estimated biomass for sardine will continue to grow over the next decade. I believe that the CPSAS should discuss this situation again and consider appealing to the Council to make the reallocation date earlier by at least a month (September 1<sup>st</sup>). The reallocation process is in place to “to help ensure that the optimum yield will be achieved” (Federal Register, December 27, 2000). With one small area having a very large allocation and another large area having a small allocation, it seems that the optimum yield cannot be met as easily as one would hope. As panel members we all have a responsibility to the industry that we represent. It seems fair and logical that the reallocation date is at least one month earlier. It also seems that there will be more positive support from the southern area if recommendations alter the date of reallocation, rather than suspending the allocation entirely.

