

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
METHODOLOGY REVIEW PRELIMINARY TOPIC SELECTION

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met jointly with the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) to hear a presentation by Kirk Lynn regarding the Proposal for Methodology Review of the Southern California Coastal Pelagic Species Survey (Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 1), a collaborative research project sponsored by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Wetfish Producers Association.

The goal of this field research is to provide additional information to improve future stock assessments, specifically to provide an index of abundance in the nearshore areas of the Southern California Bight (SCB) that are currently missed in existing surveys. The SCB is considered the “core” area for current CalCOFI and SW Fishery Science Center surveys of CPS, including sardine and anchovy. Two projects are proposed:

- Project 1 is intended to develop a nearshore relative index of abundance for CPS, while collecting length and age composition information;
- Project 2 is intended to develop inshore correction factors to more accurately determine nearshore fish abundance inshore of the areas covered by research vessel transects in the SCB.

The CPSAS has heard many reports from fishermen who have seen a large biomass of CPS in nearshore waters, inside the areas transected by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research ships, but this abundance has not appeared in recent year stock assessments. Fishermen in the Pacific Northwest also have voiced concern over the apparent disconnect between acoustic surveys and the biomass observed by fishermen.

Both the assessment workshop conducted in May 2016 and the recent egg and larval production report of the central anchovy subpopulation in the SCB (Agenda Item G.4.a SWFSC Report) pointed out the deficiency in current surveys in part due to the lack of data from the near-shore inside existing survey tracks. Both the report and SSC acknowledged that any biomass estimate developed with existing data would be negatively biased.

The CPSAS commends efforts by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Wetfish Producers Association to address the acknowledged deficiencies in current stock assessments. We encourage the Council to approve a methods review of this project, so that it may be refined as appropriate with hope that it will be considered in future CPS stock assessments.