

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF NEW EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS FOR 2021

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) received three preliminary exempted fishing permit (EFP) proposals. Two of these proposals have been previously reviewed (Agenda Item H.1, [Attachments 1](#) and [2](#)). A third EFP proposal that had not been previously reviewed ([Agenda Item H.1, Attachment 3](#)) was reviewed by the SSC at this meeting.

Diane Pleschner-Steele (California Wetfish Producers Association) presented a short summary of their EFP proposal for collecting biological samples from a limited directed Pacific sardine fishery to the SSC. The impetus for this proposal was the lack of age information for use in the stock assessment of Pacific sardine following the closure of the directed sardine fishery in 2015 as highlighted in the [2020 Pacific Sardine Stock Assessment Review Panel report](#). This EFP was designed after consultation with the analysts who conducted the last sardine stock assessment and sampling from each landing will be conducted by California Department of Fish and Wildlife personnel. Total landings will be limited to 620 mt across two areas (Monterey and Southern California). Landings will be further stratified with a goal of 20 mt per month for each area during 2021.

The SSC agreed that continuation of the collection of age-composition data was useful and the EFP should be supported.

The SSC noted there was inconsistency across the Council's fishery management plans (FMPs) in its role in review of EFPs under the respective Council Operating Procedures (COPs). The Coastal Pelagic Species, Highly Migratory Species (HMS), and Groundfish COPs all have identified a two-meeting process but the role of the SSC differs according to the FMP. The process identified in the HMS FMP that tasks the SSC with review of selected EFPs during the second meeting, after the HMS Management Team identifies a significant scientific component that would benefit from SSC review during the first meeting, is the SSC's preferred approach.