

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS FOR 2021-2022 – FINAL ACTION

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) discussed requests for three exempted fishing permits (EFPs), two by the California Wetfish Producers Association (CWPA) in cooperation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and another by the West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group (WCP) in cooperation with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. All collaborative projects intend to address the continuing need for data, including alternative biological sampling and collection by purse seine net, to assess CPS biomass inshore of current National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Acoustic Trawl surveys.

Both the WCP and CWPA are working collaboratively with the National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Fisheries Science Center in an effort to improve survey data collection that will lead to better-informed stock assessments and fishery management. Two surveys will focus on confirming biological composition and school size of CPS estimated by acoustics surveys and spotter planes. In addition, a third survey will collect biological data, especially fishery age structure data. Fishery age data have not been included in the model since the directed fishery closed in 2015. The CPSAS urges the Council to approve these EFP proposals as submitted.

A minority of the CPSAS supports approval of WCP's EFP proposal but differs from the majority of the CPSAS regarding the two EFP proposals from CWPA. While a minority (the Conservation Representative) appreciates the importance of conducting biological research in nearshore waters, a minority recommends not moving forward with CWPA's biological sampling EFP proposal due to the collapsed condition of sardine. With respect to CWPA's point set EFP, a minority recommends consideration of lower catch levels than those requested, in keeping with a lower acceptable biological catch and annual catch limit for 2021-2022.

PFMC
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