

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT
ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) wants to comment on some language in the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act which was pointed out to us by members of the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel. The language as follows creates a precedent which we find troubling with regard to live bait.

“when setting annual catch limits for forage fish fisheries, assess, specify, and *reduce such limits by the diet needs of fish species and other marine wildlife, such as marine mammals and birds, for which forage fish is a significant part of their diet.*”

We feel this language could be used to target the live bait fishery upon which the recreational and commercial fisheries on the west coast are directly dependent. According to [Agenda Item, E.4.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 2, April 2021](#), the live bait fishery for sardines prior to the pandemic was about 1,800 mt per year on average, most of it taken in the Southern California Bight from what is likely the southern stock of Pacific sardine. Anchovies were not included here but we are told 1,000 mt would probably be a good annual estimate coastwide as small amounts are taken for the recreational and commercial albacore fisheries in Washington and Oregon.

It also bears noting that the harvest control rules for Coastal Pelagic Species fisheries already accounts for the needs of dependent predators. We are concerned that this language could interfere with the above-mentioned fisheries. The small amount of these species taken for live bait should be mentioned as being excluded in this Act.

PFMC
09/10/21