

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON SARDINE  
HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2023-2024- FINAL  
ACTION

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) received a report on Pacific sardine harvest specifications and management measures.

We support the Scientific and Statistical Committee's recommendations for the overfishing limit (OFL; 5,506 mt) and maintaining category 2 sigma ([Agenda Item H.4.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, April 2023](#)). Survey results show a 37 percent increase in the estimated population of the northern subpopulation from last year to 69,506 mt. Fishermen have observed increasing and substantial numbers of sardines, particularly in southern California, where catches are more prevalent in the bait fishery. In addition, the revised habitat model suggests a substantial portion of the catches (including bycatch in southern California) are from the southern subpopulation.

We support the CPS Management Team's (CPSMT) recommendations of:

P\* Buffer 0.40

Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC): 3,953 mt

Annual Catch Limit (ACL): 3,953 mt

Annual Catch Target (ACT): 3,600 mt

We also support the CPSMT Recommended Accountability Measures:

1. Incidental landing limit in CPS fisheries of 20 percent.
2. If landings in the live bait fishery attain 2,500 mt, a per landing limit of one mt of Pacific sardine per trip will apply to the live bait fishery.
3. If the ACT of 3,600 mt is attained, a per trip limit of one mt of Pacific sardine applies to all CPS fisheries.
4. An incidental per landing allowance of two mt of Pacific sardine in non-CPS fisheries until the ACL is reached.

We believe that the 720 mt proposed to be allocated to the two EFPs (150 mt to the point set EFP and 570 to the biological sampling EFP) will leave sufficient Pacific sardines for both the live bait fishery and bycatch in other fisheries (see Table 3 of Agenda Item H.4.a, Supplemental CPSMT Report 1, April 2023) and recommend the Council approve these amounts.

We further support the SSC's recommendations for:

1. A workshop for revising the  $E_{msy}$ . The CPSAS recommends this occur prior to the next specification cycle (April 2024), if possible.
2. NMFS scientists to revisit DISTRIBUTION term (currently 87 percent for the northern subpopulation) in light of the revisions to the habitat model.

While recognizing the shortcoming of the current management of sardines (including the lack of management of the southern subpopulation), we believe that management revisions should wait until completion of more of the ongoing sardine research concerning the sardine population and its distribution, as that research will provide for better management of the sardine population as a whole. Developing management now is likely to result in some waste of resources and duplication of effort. See our report under [Agenda Item H.1.c, Supplemental CPSAS Report 1](#) for more discussion on this issue.

PFMC  
04/04/23