

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL  
MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) strongly recommends that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) prioritize the scoping and adoption of a range of alternatives for the management of all Pacific sardine in U.S. waters for its April meeting, under the “CPS Science Needs and Priorities – Scoping” agenda item and rename it as “Sardine Stock Definitions and Management- Scoping”. Evidence suggests that a large share of Pacific sardine in U.S. waters (and most of those caught in U.S. fisheries) are not part of what is currently considered the northern subpopulation, the only population currently managed under the CPS Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

We recommend that the Council request a white paper from Council staff that outlines the most current science concerning the Pacific sardine stock structure and distribution (including any published and unpublished papers by Southwest Fisheries Science Center staff concerning population distributions under the current habitat model and sardine genetics, literature reviews of sardine stock research, and the paper by Richard Parrish and Diane Pleschner-Steele concerning the sardine population received at this meeting as [public testimony](#)), an overview of current management (including in season accounting against the annual catch limit), and potential issues that may arise under different possible management structures. The staff white paper should also include relevant information concerning issues that arise as sardine migrate into other countries’ jurisdictions and potential means of addressing those issues.

Sardine are very important to several CPS fisheries and encountered in almost all West Coast fisheries. Development of management for all sardines in U.S. waters is critical to ensuring that fishing opportunities are provided to this fleet. Live-bait fisheries are also at risk of being unnecessarily constrained by the current management system, which limits catch based on northern subpopulation estimates despite a portion of their catch not being from that stock, according to stock assessment data.

We strongly urge the Council to begin the process of managing all sardine in U.S. waters by prioritizing the scoping of management alternatives at its April meeting, in a “Sardine Stock Definitions and Management - Scoping” agenda item above all other CPS data, science, and management needs.

PFMC  
11/17/24