

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
STOCK ASSESSMENT PRIORITIZATION

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) heard from West Coast Region (WCR) and Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) staff regarding options for altering the current schedule for Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) stock assessments outlined in the situation summary. The current schedule is not considered by the SWFSC to be viable, due to the need to divert staff resources to evaluate gear and survey performance of the new Integrated West Coast Pelagics Survey.

The SSC agrees that the need to conduct a methodology review of the integrated survey to fully evaluate any potential challenges for forthcoming assessments in 2026 justifies postponing the currently scheduled benchmark assessments as recommended in Agenda Item J.3, Attachment 1. The SSC recommends that a benchmark assessment for Pacific sardine be conducted no later than 2027, along with a stock assessment update of Pacific mackerel later in 2027. The SSC considers a benchmark assessment for Pacific sardine to be a higher priority, as that stock is currently under a rebuilding schedule. A benchmark assessment for Pacific mackerel could be conducted in 2028.

Based on discussions with the SWFSC, the SSC recommends that analyses leading to any proposed revision to  $E_{MSY}$  for Pacific sardine be developed prior to or in concert with a new Pacific sardine benchmark assessment. If  $E_{MSY}$  is reviewed in advance of the assessment, an in-person meeting could be conducted separately as a methodology review.

The SSC notes that an initial exploration of data and informal discussion about potential changes to  $E_{MSY}$  could also be helpful during the 2025 Pacific sardine update assessment.

PFMC  
11/15/24