



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Brad Pettinger, Chair | Merrick J. Burden, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 28, 2025

TO: Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team and Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel and Interested Persons

FROM: Katrina Bernaus, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: April 2025 Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet in person April 11 – 15, 2025, in San Jose, California. The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) and the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) will meet in person on April 11-13. The Council is scheduled to take up CPS matters on April 13 and 14. Major topics for discussion at this meeting are below. For more detailed information, please refer to the situation summaries in the Briefing Book materials.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report (G.1)

NMFS will provide a regulatory update and the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) will provide an update on research and science center activities.

2025-26 Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) - Final Action (G.2)

One notice of intent for exempted fishing permit activities was submitted at the November 2024 meeting, for ongoing EFP activities designed to support stock survey work. If approved by the Council, the proponents will submit their applications to NMFS. Permitted harvest amounts by the EFP will be decided upon under Agenda Item G.3.

Pacific Sardine Assessment, Harvest Specifications and Management Measures for 2025-26 – Final Action (G.3)

The NMFS SWFSC completed an update assessment of the Pacific sardine, which will be used to set harvest specifications and management measures for the 2025-2026 fishing year. The CPS Subcommittee of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) convened in February 2025 to review an update assessment for Pacific sardine and discuss a correlation analysis between CalCOFI-based temperature and sardine population dynamics. The SSC will review the draft update assessment (Attachment 1) and Subcommittee report during their April online meeting and provide recommendations on the assessment, overfishing limit, and sigma. The CPSAS and CPSMT should be prepared to make recommendations on a P*, EFP allowances (as determined

under G.2), and incidental and live bait harvest allowances for the 2025 – 2026 fishing year. The CPSAS and CPSMT should be prepared to recommend an annual catch limit, considering the revised Pacific sardine rebuilding plan recommended by the Council in November 2024. The CPSMT and CPSAS should be prepared to make recommendations for Council consideration.

Pacific Mackerel Specifications and Management Measures for 2025-2027 - Final Action (G.4)

The NMFS SWFSC completed a catch-only projection update of the Pacific mackerel, which will be used to set harvest specifications and management measures for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 fishing years. The CPSMT and CPSAS should make recommendations to the Council on a P*, annual catch limit, and any other management measures for the upcoming biennia.

Science and Management Priorities (G.5)

Council staff have prepared a white paper on CPS Science and Management Priorities (Attachment 1). The CPSAS and CPSMT should discuss the list of potential topics, and the proposed process described in the document, making recommendations on adoption and/or revisions as they deem necessary. The CPSAS and CPSMT should also discuss the expected workload for various topics and make recommendations to the Council on the priority level for each item on the list. The CPSAS and CPSMT should be prepared to make recommendations to the Council on both near- and long-term workload priorities, considering sequencing of priorities.

Research and Data Needs (C.2)

According to the [Magnuson-Stevens Act](#), the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is required to review the issue of research and data needs and provide a list of the Council's priorities to support the management of U.S. west coast fisheries.

Per the framework for this review cycle, in November 2024 the Council adopted science and management challenges to guide the next steps (descriptions provided in [Agenda Item D.3.a, Supplemental SSC Report 1, November 2024](#)). These high-level challenges were an initial step to communicate prioritization of areas where research is needed to advance Council objectives.

The SSC then conducted an exercise to identify and compile preliminary research and data need recommendations which could be pursued for potential solutions under each of these challenges (Agenda Item C.2.a, SSC Report 1). This included additional outreach with Council advisory bodies where possible. The report format provides a concise and streamlined set of recommended research and data needs.

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to adopt a list of preliminary research and data needs. The Council will consider the SSC preliminary recommendations, reports from advisory bodies regarding their perspectives, and any public comment.

At the June 2025 meeting, the SSC will provide their final recommendations, the preliminary list could be refined, if needed, and a final research and data needs list is scheduled to be adopted by the Council.

Council Operations and Priorities (C.5)

In June 2024, the Council provided guidance and set benchmarks to improve operational efficiency, reduce costs, enhance public participation, and strengthen decision-making processes. At the April meeting, staff will present an update on the progress made in implementing these recommendations.

Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning (H.3)

In addition to routine consideration of future meeting agendas, the CPSMT and CPSAS should recommend scheduling of a Science and Management Priorities agenda item, based on the topics and priorities discussed under Agenda Item G.5, and provide guidance to the Council.

Socioeconomic Framework Workplan and Update (C.3)

Under this agenda item, the Council will receive an update on Inflation Reduction Act Project 2, *Decision Making for Stronger Fishing Communities*. The focus of this project is to develop a decision support framework that (a) enhances the Council’s ability to measure and understand the impacts of its management actions on West Coast fishing communities, and (b) helps the Council identify strategies and steps it can take that improve the resilience of these communities to short- and long-term change. A request for proposals for a contractor to assist with the design and implementation of the project recently closed, and Council staff are now reviewing proposals and hope to identify a contractor in the coming weeks.

Adaptive Management Workplan and Update (C.4)

Under this agenda item, the Council will receive an update on Inflation Reduction Act Project 1, *Flexible and Adaptive Management*. The focus of this project is to identify and apply innovations that make review and implementation of management actions more timely, efficient, and responsive to changing conditions. A key outcome would be decision-making frameworks and/or new or revised processes that allow for more adaptive and flexible management in the face of rapidly changing conditions.

Council staff will prepare a supplemental attachment that describes some approaches to increase flexibility and responsiveness, including examples of challenges from each of the Council’s Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) that adaptive management may help to mitigate or resolve. Advisory Bodies may wish to provide input to the Council at the April meeting on management or process challenges within their respective FMPs that could benefit from further consideration as candidate topics for this project. The Council may then choose to identify priority actions or a specific FMP to focus on as it moves forward with implementing *Flexible and Adaptive Management*.

KNB:kma

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.3 – Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Item B.1 – Open Comment
3. Agenda Item G – Coastal Pelagic Species
4. Agenda Item C – Cross Fishery Management Plan
5. Agenda Item H – Administrative Matters
6. CPSMT Agenda
7. CPSAS Agenda
8. Informational Reports
9. General Information and Council Roster

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