

**COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON PACIFIC  
 MACKEREL**

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) notes that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommends the assessment be classified as category 2 despite some concerns with 2025 catch-only projection. The CPSAS, with the exception of the conservation representative, concurs with the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) that the Council should maintain a P\* of 0.45 in setting the specifications. The CPSAS also notes that vessels have reported large schools of Pacific mackerel. Also, hook-and-line fisherman in Southern California had consistent supplies of Pacific mackerel year-round. The CPSAS has concerns that the acoustic trawl survey is not accounting for mackerel in part due to their ability to evade the net and therefore the recent low survey estimates are not representative of the true population. These observations suggest that the biomass is not overestimated by the model, and support maintaining a P\* of 0.45 without additional buffers.

Fishery participants also believe that maintaining a high P\* is important for the fishery to have opportunities to increase catches, should the markets strengthen. Large schools close to ports are also needed for fishing, which typically only occurs when the fishery is able to support that fishing. We believe that for the fishery to remain viable, it needs opportunities within the bounds of what is scientifically supported that can be opportunistically pursued when conditions are ripe.

The CPSAS, with the exception of the conservation representative, concurs with the Pacific mackerel harvest specification recommendations of the CPSMT (Agenda Item G.4, Supplemental CPSMT Report 1):

**Table 1. CPSMT Proposed 2026-2027 Pacific Mackerel Harvest Specifications (in metric tons)**

Biomass	61,737
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	12,965
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC, Category 2)	10,084
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	10,084
Harvest Guideline (HG)	9,143
Annual Catch Target (ACT)	8,143
Incidental	1,000

**Table 2. CPSMT Proposed 2026-2027 Pacific Mackerel Harvest Specifications (in metric tons)**

Biomass	67,954
OFL	14,270
ABC (Category 2)	11,099
ACL (=ABC)	11,099
HG	10,448
ACT	9,448
Incidental	1,000

Additionally, the CPSAS recommends the management measures described by the CPSMT which are applied to each separate fishing year. Should the directed fishery realize the ACT, the National Marine Fisheries Service should close the directed fishery and shift to an incidental-only fishery for the remainder of the fishing season, up to 1,000 mt. There would be a 45 percent incidental landing allowance when Pacific mackerel are landed with other CPS and a 3 mt per-landing limit of Pacific mackerel when landed in non-CPS fisheries.

In addition, a public comment was provided by Oceana ([Agenda Item G.4, Public Comment](#)) that suggests acoustic trawl surveys in 2023 and 2024 were under the overfished stock threshold of 18,200 tons, yet these survey results were not incorporated into the stock assessment model since it was a catch only projection. This exclusion results in increased model reliance on the stock-recruit relationship to inform recruitment, leading to high uncertainty in estimates of stock biomass in model years 2023-2026. Because of this uncertainty, the conservation representative recommends additional precaution in upcoming specifications, which include decreasing the P\* value to 0.4 be more risk-averse and relying on best available estimates of interannual trends to refine or update assessment projections. In this case, the ABC would be below the HG and the conservation representative would recommend an ACL=ABC and an ACT of 1,000 mt less than the ACL to allow for the incidental only fishery.

The CPSAS as a whole supports additional ways to survey Pacific mackerel, including expansions of current surveys, and other data sources (e.g., eDNA, drones, fishery dependent data) to improve our estimation of the biomass of mackerel off the West Coast.

PFMC  
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