

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) strongly encourages the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) to expeditiously pursue a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment to revise the management of Pacific sardines to include all sardines off the U.S. West coast. The current management of only the northern subpopulation continues to threaten industry. Directed sardine fishery opportunities have been eliminated by the failure to consider all sardines in the stock assessment. Live bait fishing and fisheries that depend on sardine for incidental catches could also be constrained by management measures intended to protect a “northern subpopulation” despite the habitat model that indicates that much of those catches are not from that stock.

We encourage the Council to, at its earliest opportunity, review the best available science concerning the stock structure (i.e., one stock v. two stocks) to fashion alternatives for analysis that will provide industry and coastal communities with reasonable access to sardine stocks. Focusing on a reasonably limited set of alternatives as directed by the best available science will improve management and make more efficient use of staff time.

The other sardine issues proposed for consideration under this item (e.g., E_{msy} improvement and DISTRIBUTION) will need to be considered under any revised management program. As such, we encourage the Council to undertake consideration of these issues as a part of the more comprehensive sardine management item, rather than attempting to resolve these issues under the current northern subpopulation stock definition.

Although stock assessment frequency for Pacific mackerel and the northern subpopulation of northern anchovy should be reconsidered, given the low fishing pressure in these fisheries, these issues are lesser conservation, management, or industry concerns. Likewise, the central subpopulation of northern anchovy and incidental catch limit considerations are a lower priority than issues related to sardine management.

The CPSAS supports the proposed process outlined in Agenda Item G.2., Attachment 1 to have a routine item to consider CPS priorities.

PFMC
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