

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON PACIFIC
SARDINE HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR
2026–2027 – FINAL ACTION

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) reviewed the materials available under Agenda Item F.4 for the northern subpopulation of Pacific sardine. The CPSMT also reviewed the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) report recommending an overfishing limit (OFL) and corresponding acceptable biological catch (ABC) values for 2026–2027 harvest specifications.

There was no assessment of Pacific sardine in 2026 due to the Integrated West Coast Pelagics Survey methodology review that occurred in February 2026 ([PFMC November 2024 Decision Summary Document](#)). The SSC has recommended rolling over the 2025 update assessment ([Agenda Item F.4.a Supplemental SSC Report 1](#)) that projected an age 1+ biomass estimate of 30,158 mt ([F.4 Attachment 1](#)). The SSC further recommended a Category 3 sigma value of 2.0 and an OFL of 4,645 mt for the 2026–2027 fishing season based on the rolled-over age 1+ biomass estimate. The stock remains below the CUTOFF value of 150,000 mt of age 1+ biomass; therefore, the CPS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) dictates that the primary directed fishery be closed for the 2026–2027 fishing year. This does not prohibit exempted fishing permits (EFPs), incidental catch, minor directed catch, or catch for live bait, recreational, and tribal fisheries.

The CPSMT recommends setting the annual catch limit (ACL) equal to 2,200 mt, consistent with the revised Pacific sardine rebuilding plan implemented by Amendment 23 to the CPS FMP in May 2025.

The CPSMT recommends a P* value of 0.45 to account for the risk of exceeding the OFL. With an OFL of 4,645 mt, an ACL of 2,200 mt, and the closure of the directed commercial fishery, the risk of exceeding the OFL is extremely low. Landings have averaged less than 2,200 mt since the directed fishery was closed in the 2015–2016 fishing year (Table 2). Daily data collection now facilitates the monitoring of landings if they approach the ACL so that management can respond quickly, resulting in a very low risk of exceeding the ACL.

Applying a P* value of 0.45 produces an ABC of 3,613 mt for the 2026–2027 fishing year. The CPSMT recommends an annual catch target (ACT) of 2,100 mt for the 2026–2027 fishing year (Table 1). This accommodates recent levels of sardine harvest in CPS fisheries and incidental harvest in non-CPS fisheries, as well as the proposed 520 mt from the EFP request ([Agenda Item F.3 Attachment 1](#)). Setting an ACT of 2,100 mt would establish a trigger for accountability measures to prevent exceeding the ACL of 2,200 mt. If the ACL were to be reached, sardine harvest would be prohibited in all CPS and non-CPS fisheries.

The CPSMT also recommends the accountability measures listed below to prevent exceeding the ACL. The CPSMT notes that all sources of catch, including any EFP research set-asides, the live bait fishery, incidental catch in CPS and non-CPS fisheries, and minor directed fishing, will be accounted for against the ACL. These recommended harvest specifications align with the revised

rebuilding plan for Pacific sardine. Table 2 in this report summarizes the levels of sardine catch in CPS and non-CPS fisheries for the five recent fishing seasons.

The rolled-over biomass estimate remains below the Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST) of 50,000 mt. The CPS FMP allows the incidental landing limit to range up to 20 percent when the stock is below the MSST. A 20-percent limit should be set to provide the maximum flexibility for other CPS fisheries.

Table 1. 2026–2027 Scientific and Statistical Committee recommended OFL, CPSMT-recommended P* Buffer, ABC, ACL, and ACT.

OFL	4,645 mt
P* Buffer	0.45
ABC_{Tier 3}	3,613 mt
ACL	2,200 mt
ACT	2,100 mt

CPSMT-Recommended Accountability Measures

1. Incidental landing limit in CPS fisheries of 20 percent.
2. If the ACT of 2,100 mt is attained, then a per-trip limit of 1 mt of Pacific sardine applies to all CPS fisheries.
3. An incidental per-landing allowance of 2 mt of Pacific sardine in non-CPS fisheries until the ACL is reached.

Table 2. Pacific sardine landings (mt) by fishery and harvest specifications for previous sardine fishing seasons (July 1 – June 30) from PacFIN. All values are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Fishing Season	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026²
CPS Incidental	186	149	172	170	120
Non-CPS Incidental¹	30	15	3	< 1	1
EFP	340	201	359	152	69
Live Bait	1,192	1,151	1,102	855	578
Tribal	0	0	0	0	0
Minor Directed	34	77	105	22	10
Total	1,782	1,592	1,739	1,199	778
<i>ACT</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>3,800</i>	<i>3,600</i>	<i>5,500</i>	<i>2,100</i>
<i>ACL</i>	<i>3,329</i>	<i>4,274</i>	<i>3,953</i>	<i>6,005</i>	<i>2,200</i>

¹Non-CPS incidental includes at-sea Pacific whiting fishery sardine mortality

²2025–2026 data as of March 31, 2026, and subject to change

PFMC

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