

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON
2018 EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS (EFPs) NOTICE OF INTENT

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) and the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met via webinar on November 7, 2017 and received overviews on proposals for exempted fishing permits (EFP) for 2018 from the California Wetfish Producers Association (CWPA) (Agenda item C.2. Attachment 1) and the West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group (Agenda Item C.2. Attachment 2). Both proposals are seeking exemptions from any potential restrictions on directed fishing for Pacific sardine during the 2018-2019 Pacific sardine fishing year.

At its June 2017 meeting, the Council conditionally approved the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) / CWPA aerial survey methodology for use in future CPS stock assessments, consistent with recommendations contained in the Southern California Coastal Pelagic Species Aerial Survey Methodology Review report (Agenda Item D.2. Attachment 1, June 2017). The purpose of the EFP proposal from the CWPA is to conduct fishing in 2018 to address issues identified in the aerial survey methodology review. Their proposed research project intends to sample CPS schools with qualified purse seine vessels chartered to capture a subset of the schools identified and photo-documented by aerial spotter pilots. The pilots will also conduct nearshore surveys to address uncertainties of CPS abundances in nearshore waters where large National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) survey vessels are unable to sample. Survey dates are proposed for 7 days in late August to September 2018. Point sets (whole purse seine sets) will be taken on CPS schools identified by pilots. Sets will be subsampled for biological information, and the catch sold to offset costs of the research program. The catch will not exceed a total of 500 mt of Pacific sardine.

In July 2017, the West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group provided an industry fishing vessel to accompany the NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center CPS acoustic trawl survey on select transects off Washington State and sample further inshore than the NOAA survey vessel R/V *Reuben Lasker* is capable of surveying. The F/V *Lisa Marie* hosted one NOAA scientist while an industry representative was placed on board the NOAA vessel. While no CPS samples were taken from the industry fishing vessel, an EK60 echosounder for acoustic measurements was used on the vessel. This EFP is requested by the West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group to continue and expand the collaborative effort in 2018 so that samples of CPS for species composition and individual fish metrics may be obtained through purse seine operations. The purse seine sets are not proposed for harvest for commercial processing and no more than 10 mt of CPS including Pacific sardine will be taken for scientific information. Depending upon funding, industry sampling in the Pacific Northwest would span nearshore waters that would otherwise not be surveyed, from the Canadian-Washington border to the Oregon-California border in late June and early July of 2018.

The CPSMT recognizes the value of the EFP research proposed by both groups to improve CPS stock assessments by obtaining data that has not been attainable by other means. Both proposals meet the requirements for EFP proposals as outlined in Council Operating Procedures 23. Therefore, the CPSMT recommends that the Council approve both proposals for public review. However, for the final proposals, the CPSMT recommends improved descriptions from both proponents as to how the catch of target species and impacts to non-target species, will be monitored and reported. The CPSMT offers its help in reviewing and assisting the proponents on their final proposals prior to submission. Finally, the CPSMT commends the proponents on their continuing efforts in quantifying the biomass and distribution of CPS and to improving survey techniques.

PFMC

11/14/17