

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON THE ACOUSTIC TRAWL SURVEY METHODOLOGY REVIEW-FINAL APPROVAL

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) has encouraged a review of the Acoustic-Trawl Survey Methodology (ATM) and finds the extensive review completed during January 29-February 2, 2018 to be a valuable and necessary step toward improved management of coastal pelagic species (CPS) finfish stocks. The CPSMT commends both the Review Panel and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Acoustic Trawl Survey Team for their preparation and commitment to a thorough and productive review. The CPSMT appreciates the opportunity to have participated in an advisory role on the review panel and provided comments, which are included in the Review Panel Report (Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 2). In addition to these comments, the CPSMT recommends the Council approve the ATM survey for potential use in future stock assessments and offers the following comments.

The review panel summarized their evaluation of the potential use of ATM results in stock assessments and management in Table 3 of their report. Survey results for each stock may be used as a measure of relative abundance in an integrated stock assessment, subject to a few caveats (e.g., summer survey, inshore areas addressed) and they may also be used to directly inform management following a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE). Based on the caveats listed in Table 3 and the review panel's recommendation that surveying the geographic distribution of the stock is preferred to an extrapolation for unsurveyed areas, the CPSMT interprets the panel as identifying geographic survey coverage of the stock to be the highest priority. The CPSMT strongly prefers expanded survey coverage to extrapolation for unsurveyed areas. The CPSMT also considers factors such as potential bias or uncertainty from target strengths and trawl selectivities as high priorities to address.

From a fishery management perspective, the CPSMT notes that data are particularly limited for jack mackerel and the northern stock of northern anchovy, and fisheries harvests of these stocks have been at very low levels for many years. Although biological data are being collected, the CPSMT recommends at this time that Council and NMFS resources focus on higher priority CPS survey and management needs rather than integrated stock assessments or MSEs for these stocks. The CPSMT emphasizes that addressing research needs identified in the panel report is a high priority and supports the development of the Southwest Fisheries Science Center research plan regarding ATM panel recommendations, as proposed under Agenda Item C.1.