

COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS FOR 2012

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) and the Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) met via conference call on February 28, 2012, and received an overview from Mr. Tom Jagielo on the West Coast Aerial Sardine Survey (NWSS) proposal for an exempted fishing permit (EFP). The EFP will allow the NWSS to harvest sardines during the second fishing period, after the directed fishery has closed. The methods for the summer research will be similar to those carried out in 2010 and 2011. The geographic range will be focused on the Pacific Northwest, and will not include any survey work off California. Also, the application submitted by NWSS proposes utilizing a stratified survey design for 2012 that adds additional transects in the region with the greatest observed biomass in the last three years.

The NWSS will carry out aerial transects and point sets to estimate sardine abundance within the survey area. In 2011, 53 point sets that were conducted and data from 35 of those point sets were considered valid and used in the 2011 sardine stock assessment. The CPSMT commends the NWSS in striving for a high standard for acceptance of point set data. The CPSMT encourages the proponents to continue recording the reasons for unusable point sets, and including that information in the final report.

In 2011, the EFP proponents completed the field work and provided data to the Stock Assessment Team (STAT) in a timely manner. This was very difficult to accomplish, given the amount of field work accomplished by the NWSS. In 2012, the second period directed fishing may go longer because of the higher 2012 sardine quota, thus limiting the amount of time available for the NWSS to complete sampling. The CPSMT supports the NWSS plan to increase the number of vessels and planes that would be involved, thereby increasing the likelihood that the results of the NWSS will be transmitted in a timely manner to the STAT. The NWSS has also modified its point set methods so that planes do not have to fly at 4,000 feet to select schools. In the past this requirement severely limited the number of days available because of low ceiling heights, and may have led to non-valid point sets. The CPSMT recognizes that the NWSS has worked hard to ensure that the point sets are representative of the sardine population distribution off the Oregon/Washington coast.

The NWSS is requesting 3,000 metric tons as part of its EFP in 2012, and the CPSMT supports this request because it will allow more point sets during the aerial survey. The CPSMT recognizes the value of the EFP research and resulting data to the annual sardine stock assessment. The CPSMT recommends that the Council approve the proposal for public review and requests that the final proposal include a general sampling schedule (tentative date ranges for point sets, aerial surveys, data processing/editing, submitting the data).

The CPSMT commends the applicants on their continuing efforts in quantifying the biomass of this stock and to improve these survey techniques.