

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

State rules governing Coastal Pelagic Species (e.g., Pacific sardine; CPS) fisheries are based on rules adopted federally. The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) conducts a significant public process when determining harvest limits and regulatory recommendations, which are considered and implemented (occasionally with adjustments) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

For these fisheries, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) incorporates federal regulations annually as the basis for additional or more conservative regulations adopted through the state process. The state has the latitude to adopt concurrent or more conservative regulations, not more liberal.

A single issue is set forth here for the Commission to consider: whether to adopt concurrent harvest limits and management measures for CPS fisheries for the July 2014 through June 2015 fishing period.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A significant public process was conducted by the Council in development of the 2014-2015 harvest specifications for commercial CPS fisheries.

ISSUE 1

ANNUAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR COMMERCIAL COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES FISHERIES

ANALYSIS

Species managed under the Council's CPS Fishery Management Plan include Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, northern anchovy, market squid, and jack mackerel. In addition, the plan prohibits harvest of all species of krill (euphausiids). Coastwide (WA/OR/CA), all species except jack mackerel and krill are subject to active directed commercial fisheries. In Oregon, CPS fisheries primarily target and harvest Pacific sardine, although harvest of other CPS does occur.

The recommended federal harvest limit for the 2014-2015 Pacific sardine fishery off Oregon, Washington and California was adopted by the Council at the April 2014 meeting (Attachment 4, page 4). In previous years, sardine harvest limits have been set for a calendar year (January through December), but the Council recently transitioned to setting harvest limits for a July through June year to allow better incorporation of recent data into the stock assessment.

The coastwide maximum harvest limit for the sardine fishery from July 2014 through June 2015 was set at 23,293 mt, which is a 65% decrease from the 2013 (calendar year) limit of 66,495 mt. This is the lowest harvest limit set for sardine since the implementation of federal management in 2000 (Figure 1), and represents about 6% of the 2014 sardine biomass estimated by the assessment model. The large decline in allowable harvest is due to several factors including changes to the

assessment model and harvest control rule, as well as continued observed declines in sardine biomass estimated from surveys. The population trajectory estimated by the model shows the population declining each year since peaking most recently in 2006 (Figure 2).

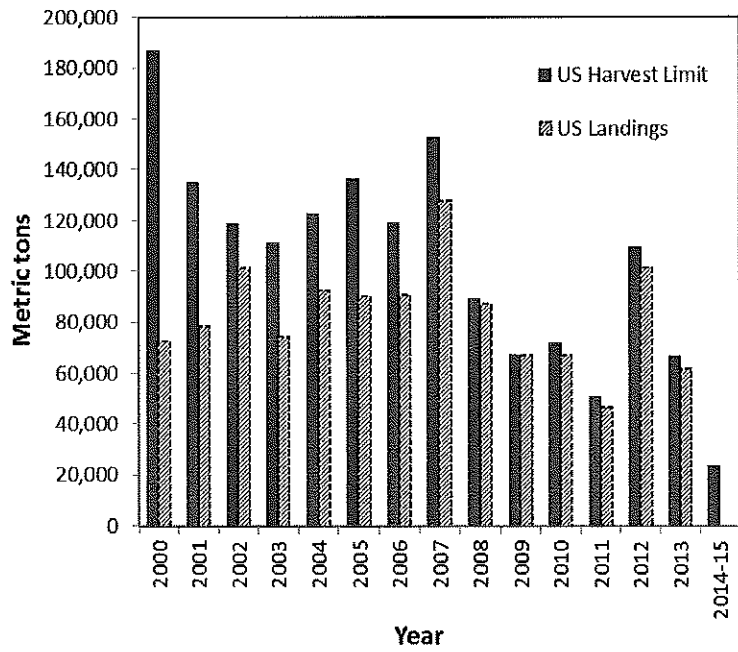


Figure 1. Annual US harvest limit and landings for Pacific sardine since the implementation of federal management

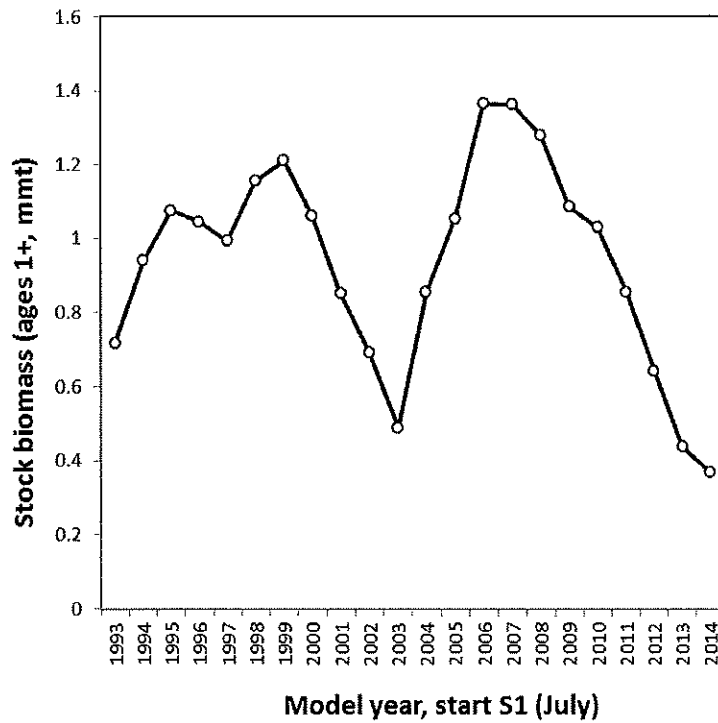


Figure 2. Sardine population trajectory (biomass) estimated by 2012 assessment in million metric tons (mmt).

The Council approved a 4,000 mt set aside for tribal fisheries, leaving 19,293 mt to be allocated across three pre-set fishing periods (i.e., seasonal allocation), with an additional 500 mt set aside in each fishing period for incidental catch in other fisheries (Table 1).

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	
	Jul 1 – Sep 14 2014	Sep 15 – Dec 31 2014	Jan 1 – Jun 30 2015	Total
Seasonal Allocation (mt)	7,718	4,823	6,752	19,293
Incidental Set Aside (mt)	500	500	500	1,500
Initial Directed Fishery Allocation (mt)	7,218	4,323	6,252	17,793

Table 1. Seasonal allocation, incidental set asides, and initial directed fishery allocation for Pacific sardine.

The total initial directed fishery allocation of 17,793 mt for 2014-2015 is a 67% decrease from the 2013 level of 54,495 mt. NMFS will take automatic in-season actions to adjust allocations in a subsequent period resulting from actual harvests over or under the allowed harvest during a fishing period.

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt, by reference, federal regulations and harvest specifications for CPS fisheries into Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) without modification.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt concurrent rules for Coastal Pelagic Species fisheries as shown in Attachment 3.
2. Adopt more conservative measures.

**STAFF
RECOMMENDATION**

1. Option 1

DRAFT MOTION	I move to approve the staff recommendations for the 2014-2015 Coastal Pelagic Species fisheries as proposed in Attachment 3.
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon filing.