

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting: June 3-4, 2011 Commission Meeting

Agenda item #9: Coastal Forage Fish (Part II) – Briefing

Staff Contact: Michele Culver, Regional Director
Lorna Wargo, Coastal Marine Fisheries Biologist

Presenter(s): Michele Culver, Regional Director
Lorna Wargo, Coastal Marine Fisheries Biologist

Background:

Coastal forage fish, including sardines, anchovy, herring, and krill, are included in the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (Council) Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) fishery management plan (FMP). The Council develops and adopts a coast wide annual harvest guideline for sardines, which is an actively managed species, and is in the process of setting overfishing levels for monitored species that are “in the fishery,” such as northern anchovy. Ecosystem component species, such as herring, are not considered “in the fishery;” as such, their catches are tracked, but overfishing limits are not developed or adopted. The harvest of krill under the CPS FMP is prohibited.

From 2000-2009, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife had an emerging commercial purse seine fishery for Pacific sardines; effective July 2009, the Legislature transitioned the sardine fishery to an established commercial fishery.

The annual sardine stock assessment relies heavily upon data from fishery independent surveys from southern California as the primary index of abundance; however, for the past few years, the sardine industry has collected additional data from the Northwest through an exempted fishing permit. These data have been incorporated into the assessment process.

The topic of the amount of sardines that could be used for purposes other than human consumption and fishing bait has been raised in all West Coast states. Since 2006, Washington has implemented a limit of 15 percent restriction across the season, which applies to all permit holders and processors individually, and Oregon adopted consistent regulations. There have been requests to relax this restriction, particularly from one of the processing facilities in Washington. We have met with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff to discuss these issues, and both states have continued to keep this restriction in place.

At the meeting, staff will brief the Commission of the management approach for forage fish under the CPS FMP, which takes into account the amount of fish available to United States waters and considers the biological and ecological impacts of harvesting forage fish. Corresponding state management of coastal forage fish species will also be addressed.

Policy issues:

None—briefing only.

Public involvement process and outcome:

N A

Action requested:

None.

Draft motion language:

N A

Justification for Commission Action:

N A

Communications Plan:

N A
