COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS

The Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel (CPSAS) supports the preliminary research and data needs recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in Agenda Item C.2, SSC Report 1. Before these recommendations, we believe that research that contributes immediately and directly to maintaining the National Marine Fisheries Services' (NMFS) core function of fishery management should be prioritized in the current funding climate. Maintenance of nearshore surveys of CPS, particularly in times of low abundance, should be emphasized. Additionally, agencies and science centers engaged in research (e.g., biological sampling) should ensure coordination of efforts.

The CPSAS supports the following additional considerations for CPS fisheries be incorporated into the recommended research and data needs.

Challenge 1: Data Collection

Indices of abundance:

- Research should include developing a method of incorporating fishery-dependent sampling to reveal forage fish in predator diet (particularly in areas where surveys observe no fish).

- NMFS should consider additional CPS surveys (outside the annual summer survey), a greater offshore geographic survey scope, and all available data sources (including satellites, drones, eDNA, and other methods) to complement and augment existing surveys. The use of eDNA may be beneficial for detecting presence of species in times of low abundance when catchability of the existing surveys is particularly weak.

Challenge 2: Stock Assessment Methodologies

- Catchability assumptions should be further investigated, particularly when the abundance of some species is relatively low.

Challenge 4: Evaluating Fishery Impacts

- Further work should be undertaken to consider the relative impacts of natural mortality from marine mammal and seabird predation relative to fisheries impacts to more fully understand the potential for fisheries to affect stocks (particularly in times of low abundance and low catch limits).

PFMC
04/11/25