Preface

The National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Southwest Regional Office (SWRO) and Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) convened a two-day workshop on April 24-25, 2012, in Monterey, California, to consider rights-based management (RBM) approaches in the context of whether they have the potential to enhance the social and economic sustainability of the U.S. West Coast Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) fishery.
Key objectives were to:

- identify industry's key issues and objectives related to the future of the sardine fishery, both coastwide and regionally;
- explore how similar issues and objectives have been addressed through RBM approaches adopted elsewhere and consider lessons learned;
- review key elements of RBM programs and discuss industry's perspectives on existing and potential possibilities within each element; and
- identify follow-up steps needed to further consider rights-based management or other approaches.

The workshop included panel discussions and presentations featuring fisheries managers and stakeholders experienced with RBM approaches used for other fisheries in the United States. Discussions explored how RBM approaches have accommodated regional interests and flexibility, community considerations, and economic efficiency and net benefits.

Approximately 40 participants attended the workshop, including commercial fishermen, seafood processors, representatives of the Makah Nation and the Quinault Indian Nation, state and federal fishery managers, staff and members of the Pacific Fishery Management Council, and environmental organization representatives.

Mark Helvey, NMFS Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries at the SWRO, opened the workshop by welcoming participants and highlighting the purpose of the workshop as an opportunity for stakeholders in the fishery to further explore ideas and interests around RBM approaches. He emphasized his hope to build upon the productive discussions during the February 2010 Coastal Pelagic Species Workshop and underscored that no decisions would be made during this workshop. Mr. Helvey cited several key developments in the fishery since 2010:

- The fishery continues to operate under pressures similar to a "derby" fishery with competition for harvest resulting in early season closures.
- The Quinault tribe was provided a set-aside quantity under its treaty rights.
- Several members of the fishery expressed interest in a catch share approach.

Sam Herrick, Industry Economist at the SWFSC, recalled the significant interest in communities and regional allocations at the 2010 workshop and suggested that participants revisit those discussions. In contrast to the 2010 workshop, the intent of this workshop was to examine a wider array of RBM tools and narrow the focus to U.S. experiences. Acknowledging different perspectives in the sardine fishery, Dr. Herrick encouraged participants to think beyond individual fishing quotas to evaluate an array of RBM tools for their potential to better serve the various needs in the fishery. He agreed with participants' assertions during the 2010 workshop that "one size does not fit all" and stressed the importance of an inclusive, "bottom up" approach to the design of any RBM program.

Following the opening remarks, Scott McCreary and Bennett Brooks, facilitators with CONCUR Inc., reviewed the agenda, proposed ground rules, and facilitated participation during the workshop.