



Washington  
Department of  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**

# **Summary Report of the 2006 Experimental Purse Seine Fishery for Pacific Sardine (*Sardinops sagax*)**

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**WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (WDFW)  
SUMMARY OF THE 2005 EXPERIMENTAL PURSE SEINE FISHERY  
FOR PACIFIC SARDINE (*Sardinops sagax*)**

**Management**

In Washington, sardines are managed under the Emerging Commercial Fishery provisions, which provide for the harvest of a newly classified species, or harvest of a previously classified species in a new area or by new means (WAC 220-88-010). From 2000 through 2002, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife had trial purse seine fisheries for Pacific sardines, under which the number of participants cannot be limited. Following an extensive public process which included establishing and meeting with a formal Sardine Advisory Board, the Director decided to advance the sardine fishery to an experimental fishery in 2003, under the Emerging Commercial Fisheries legislation, which mandates that permits be limited.

Pacific sardines are managed under the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) fishery management plan. The Pacific Council develops and adopts a coastwide annual harvest guideline, which (through 2006) is then allocated between the two areas which take into account the biological and ecological impacts of harvesting forage fish. In 2006, the coastwide harvest guideline was allocated seasonally, with scheduled releases on January 1<sup>st</sup>, July 1<sup>st</sup>, and September 15<sup>th</sup> (Table 1).

Table 1. Harvest Guideline Release for 2006 Northern Allocation.

Date	Amount	% (mt)
January 1, 2006	35% of Harvest Guideline	41,628
July 1, 2006	40% of Harvest Guideline + Remaining	47,575
September 15, 2006	25% of Harvest Guideline + Remaining	29,734

The Northwest sardine fishery has rapidly expanded over the past few years, which was the primary reason the Department decided to convert from a trial to an experimental fishery. Oregon began its limited developmental fishery in 1999, which yielded 771 mt in sardine landings. Since then, the Northwest landings have increased for a total of 37,923 mt in 2002, 36,862 mt in 2003, and 40,493 mt in 2004. In 2006, the overall coastwide harvest guideline was 118,937 mt, producing an initial northern allocation of 41,628 mt.

**Permits and Regulations**

Fourteen fishers were issued a Washington sardine experimental fishery permits and four fishers were issued Washington sardine experimental fishery replacement permits in 2006. The initial qualifying criteria for the non-replacement permits included a cumulative total of 40 mt landed into Washington in the years 2004 and 2005. In addition to the minimum landing requirement, qualifying participants must have held a limited entry permit in 2005 and renewed their fishing license by April 1.

To qualify for a replacement permit the fisher must have at least 50% ownership in a vessel that was designated on a Washington coastal pilchard experimental fishery permit in 2004 or 2005;

must have landed a minimum of 40 mt cumulative weight of pilchard into Washington using the designated vessel referenced previously in 2004 and 2005; and must have purchased an emerging commercial fisheries license by August 1, 2006.

A full description of permit conditions and fishing regulations that applied in 2006 are contained in Appendix A.

### Fishery Description

The fishery opened on April 1, 2006, however, the first landing into Washington occurred on July 7. The Department issued a total of 18 permits and 7 of the permit holders participated in the fishery. There were three primary vessels who accounted for 75% of the total landings—one vessel fished out of Ilwaco and two fished out of Westport.

A total of 4,362.3 mt of sardines were landed into Washington. A total of 108 landings were made, of which, 79 occurred within the months of August and September (Figure 1).

A total of 127 sets were made with 95% (121) of them successful. The average catch per successful set was about 43.7 mt (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Washington sardine landings by month.

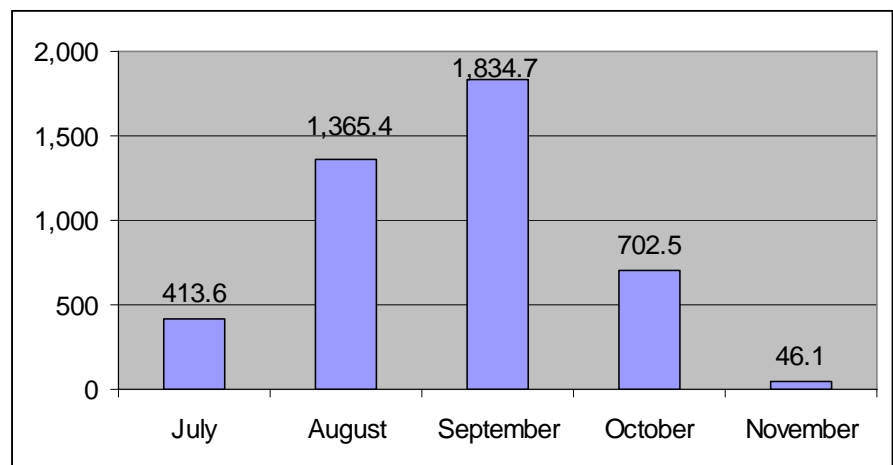
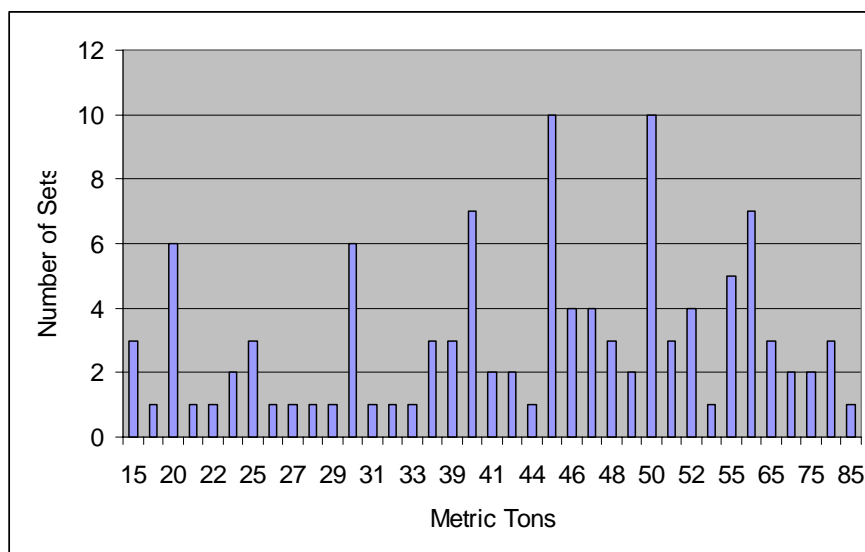


Figure 2. Amount of sardines produced per successful set.



Average landings were about 39 mt. All landings were made into either Westport or Ilwaco and were evenly split at about 50% for each port. The majority of the catch (78%) occurred in waters adjacent to Washington.

Spotter planes are sometimes used by vessels fishing out of Ilwaco and Westport. In general, pilots were receive up to about 10-15% of the landing revenue. Ex-vessel price per pound in the fishery averaged \$0.04 - \$0.06 across the season.

### Observer Coverage/Logbooks

From 2000 to 2004 there was a mandatory observer program in place to document total catch and bycatch in the sardine fishery. Bycatch was recorded in terms of species, amount, and condition; observers noted whether the fish were released or landed, and whether the fish were alive, dead, or in poor condition. Observer coverage averaged about 25% overall. In 2005, the Department decided to discontinue the observer program. Five years of observer data showed the fishery to be a relatively clean fishery and that there was a minimal impact on species of concern.

Logbooks continue to be required (Appendix B). By continuing to collect logbooks, this will allow us to collect data on the location of the sardine sets (Figure 3).

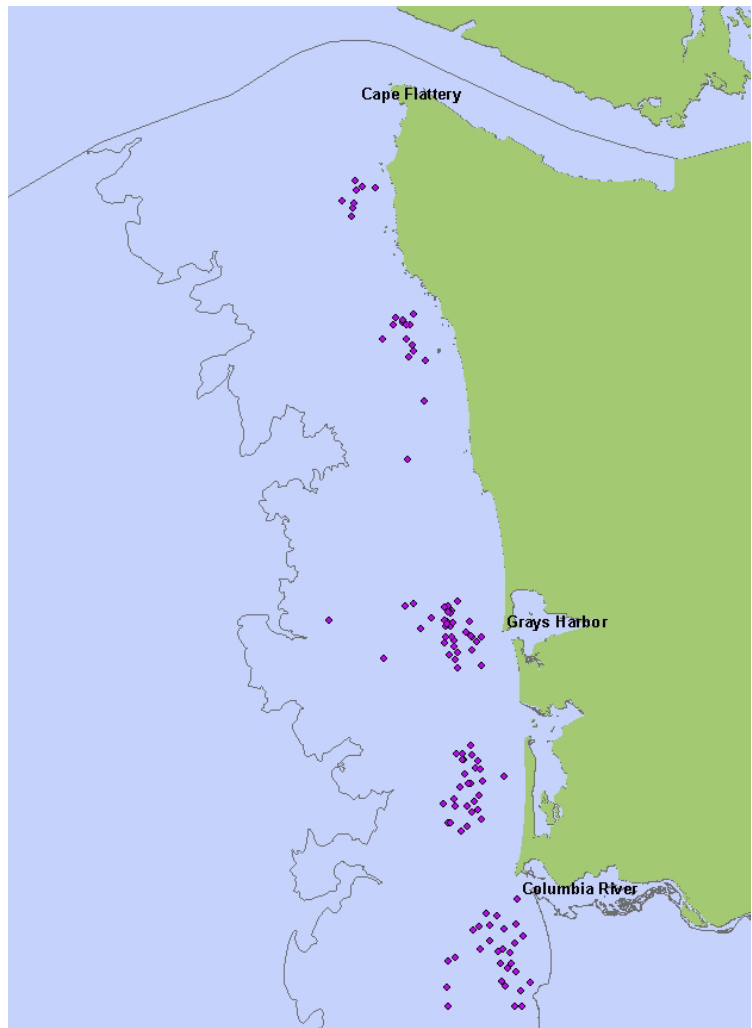
### Biological Samples

WDFW staff coordinated the collection of biological samples with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff to ensure sample coverage was evenly distributed throughout the time of the Northwest fishery. WDFW collected 15 biological samples of 25 sardines each (375 sardines total).

Both WDFW and ODFW staff extracted sardine otoliths which measured about 1.5-3 mm in length; these otoliths were sent to the WDFW laboratory in Olympia, Washington, for age-reading. Data sheets accompanied the otoliths which included the catch date, vessel name, standard lengths of the sardines, weight, sex, and maturity.

Sex and maturity were determined by using the California Department of Fish and Game

Figure 3. 2006 Washington sardine fishery set locations.



(CDFG) Standard Maturity Guide for Wetfish which was based on Hjort, J. (1914) State of Sexual Organs. Sexual maturity codes 1-4 were used for the sardine samples:

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>
(1)	Virgin individuals.
(2)	Maturing virgins or recovering spent. Males intermediate; no milt present.
(3)	Yoked oocytes visible. Milt is present and oozing in males.
(4)	Hydrated oocytes present.

Most of the samples analyzed were females (58%), with the highest subcategory overall being females with a sexual maturity of 2 (Figure 4). There were very few females with a sexual maturity of 3 and no code 4 males or females were sampled.

Figure 4. Sex and maturity of sardine samples.

Standard lengths of sardine samples were taken and ranged between 176-216 mm. They weighed 87.6-255.8 gm (Figure 5). In 2006, the average weight of the samples did not increase much over time. In general, sardine size was down compared to previous years. Average weight overall was 124.1 gm.

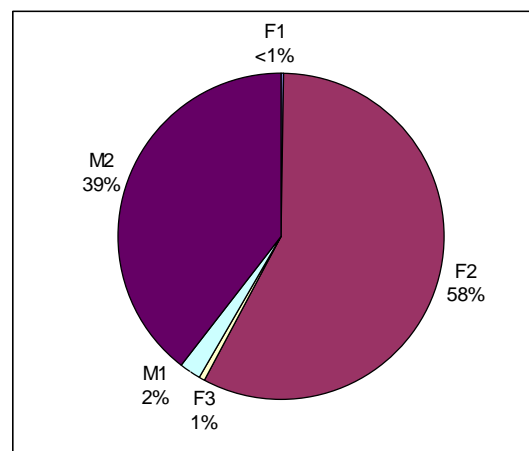
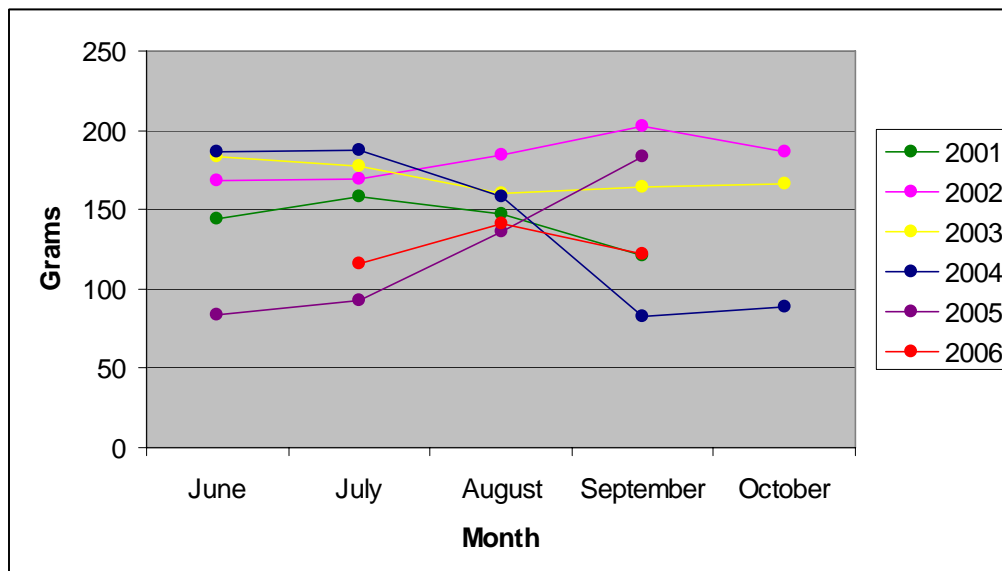


Figure 5. Average lengths taken from sardine samples.



## Comparison of Past Data

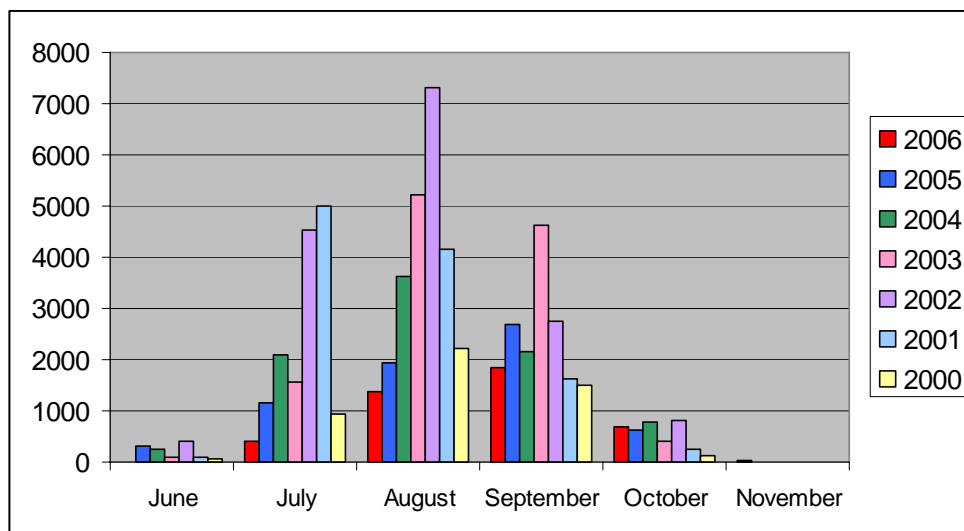
During the past six years the sardine fishery has been active, the number of vessels participating in the fishery has fluctuated. There were only 3 vessels participating in the fishery during the 2000 season, but in 2002 there were 19 vessels participating in the fishery (Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison summary of Washington sardine fisheries.

	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Landings (mt)	4,362.3	6,714	8,911	11,920	15,820	11,121	4,842
# Landings	108	207	236	288	424	299	153
# Vessels	7	11	14	10	19	13	3

The metric tons of sardines landed into Washington range from 4,791 in 2000 to 15,212 in 2002. The majority of sardines are typically landed during the months of July, August, and September (Figure 6). While the landings and vessels may have varied the observer coverage was consistently 24% to 27% prior to 2005.

Figure 6. Washington sardine landings by month.



## Summary of WDFW Activities

WDFW staff administered port sampling, data recording, and biological analyses. Staff also produced weekly landing estimates which were posted on the agency website and distributed to National Marine Fisheries, state agencies, and industry members to track attainment of the harvest guideline in-season. Staff monitored sardine offloads at processing plants for incidental catch data, weighed sub-samples of the sardine catch, and collected logbooks to determine harvest distribution, CPUE, and unobserved bycatch information. Additional staff time was spent extracting otoliths, measuring, weighing, and determining sex and maturity of samples, age-reading and summarizing observer and logbook information.

## 2006 WASHINGTON EXPERIMENTAL SARDINE FISHERY PERMIT CONDITIONS

### Permits

1. Participants are required to renew their Emerging Commercial Fisheries License (\$185 for residents; \$295 for non-residents) and Experimental Sardine Fishery Permit by April 1, 2006. Replacement permit holders must purchase their Emerging Commercial Fisheries License (\$185 for residents; \$295 for non-residents) and Experimental Sardine Fishery Permit by August 1, 2006.
2. Permits are non-transferable and must be carried on the fishing vessel during harvest and sale of catch.
3. Permit holder must designate a vessel on the permit a minimum of 48 hours prior to the first sardine fishing trip of each year; vessel designation can be changed provided the vessel has not participated in the current season.
4. A vessel cannot be designated on more than one permit.
5. The permit is subject to revocation by the Director for failure to abide by the conditions of the permit, violation of other fishing regulations, or other valid reason.

### Season

6. Permits would be valid during the time period of April 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006

### Observer Coverage

7. WDFW retains the right to require certified observers to be onboard for the duration of any trip on which sardines are harvested, and the Director has the discretion to recover costs for observer coverage.

### Data Collection

8. Agency employees will be granted full access to the catch and be allowed to gather biological data as needed. Up to 500 sardine per day may be retained by WDFW for biological information.
9. Logbooks are required and will be provided by WDFW. Completed logs must be submitted to the Department by the 15<sup>th</sup> day following the end of each month in which fishing activity occurred. Logs must be submitted to:

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Attn: Carol Henry  
48 Devonshire Road  
Montesano, WA 98563

### Gear

10. The fishery is open to purse seine gear only, and gear specifications will be detailed to ensure that the net meets a purse seine definition.
11. Legal purse seine gear must be onboard the vessel making the landing.



### Species

12. Participants may retain and sell sardine and incidental catches of mackerel, market squid, and anchovy. All other species must be released immediately and care taken to minimize damage to prohibited species.
13. No salmon may be landed on the boat's deck but must be released or dip netted directly from the net before the completion of each set.
14. Consistent with standards in the offshore whiting fishery, a mortality greater than 1 chinook per 20 mt of Pacific sardine would be sufficient to rescind a permit or close the experimental fishery.

### Fishing Area

15. The fishery would be restricted from the area inside 3 miles to minimize bycatch, conserve forage fish, and reduce conflicts with the existing baitfish fishery.

### Landings

16. All sardine landings made under the authority of this permit into Washington must comply with existing state and federal regulations and requirements.
17. The transfer of catch from one vessel to another vessel is prohibited.
18. All landings must be made to a shoreside processing facility.
19. Not more than 15% of cumulative sardine landings (across the season) can be delivered or processed for the purposes of conversion into fish flour, fish meal, fish scrap, fertilizer, fish oil, other fishery products, or byproducts for purposes other than human consumption or fishing bait.
20. Once a delivery has commenced at a processing plant, all fish onboard the vessel must be offloaded at that plant.