

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON CHANGES TO ROUTINE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2007-2008 SEASON

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) has the following comments on the management measure changes proposed by the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT):

Vessel Marking Requirements

The HMSAS decided to table this discussion until their concerns are answered by enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Drift Gillnet Fishery – Changes to the northern boundary of the leatherback sea turtle closed area

There were a variety of opinions among HMSAS members about moving the leatherback closure line off central Oregon north or south. The HMSAS requests that additional analysis on the enforcement concerns and possible biological impacts of this change be provided to the HMSAS and other advisory panels at the September meeting.

Drift Gillnet Fishery – Consistent drift gillnet gear regulations between the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and on the high seas

The HMSAS supported the work of a subcommittee composed of Bill Sutton, Peter Flournoy, Chuck Janisse, and members of the HMSMT to further develop options on gear requirements that would improve consistency between high seas vessels and vessels fishing within the EEZ.

State Recreational Bag Limits

The majority of the HMSAS supports the process of establishing recreational bag limits or trip limits for recreational anglers catching highly migratory species, whether implemented through the Council or individual state processes, if implemented by all three West Coast states.

There was a minority position where concerns over the international unknowns were discussed. Specifically, how national quotas will be developed and the lack of indication that there is a discard issue off the coast of Washington. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife is in the process of identifying alternatives appropriate for the Washington industry that include status quo and we believe an endorsement of trip limits, or quotas at this time is premature.

Recreational Harvest of Thresher Shark in Southern California

In light of concern over recent catches of thresher shark, the HMSAS encourages the team to move forward by evaluating impacts to the thresher shark population and that we endorse a proposal by the Pflegler Institute of Environmental Research (PIER) that will monitor thresher shark takes under a Sea Grant funded project. The HMSAS would support consideration by the California Department of Fish and Game of a reduced daily bag limit for thresher shark.