

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT
TEAM REPORT ON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 2-HIGH SEAS
SHALLOW-SET LONGLINE

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) discussed the alternatives under Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 2. If the Council chooses to recommend the fishery, the HMSMT recommends Alternative 2 with 10 or fewer permits and Area Closure Option 1 (east of 150 degrees W longitude) or 2 (east of 140 degrees W longitude) for the following reasons.

Observer data from the Hawaii and historic California SSLL fisheries shown in Table 4-11 of the preliminary draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) suggests there is a higher risk of loggerhead interactions to the west of 140° W than to the east of 140° W longitude. A lower level of effort resulting from a smaller fishery would help to minimize bycatch of nontarget and protected species of concern. Fishing in the area east of 140° W is also likely to reduce the chance of interactions with marine mammal stocks of concern. Conversely, allowing a fishery out to 150° W may increase economic viability by leaving more area open to fishing effort.

The HMSMT notes that under Alternative 2, take caps for allowable leatherback and loggerhead interactions would be set at levels consistent with the incidental take statement.

The economic viability analysis in Appendix B of the SEIS suggests that a fishery with up to 10 permits would be economically viable, while economic viability becomes less certain for fisheries with over 10 permits. The results showing that a fishery larger than 10 permits might not be economically viable are largely driven by the assumption that effort would be constrained by observer availability.

If the Council recommends the fishery, the HMSMT notes that under the action alternatives gear restrictions consistent with those currently applicable to the Hawaii limited access fishery permit holders fishing with SSLL gear would be required in the proposed fishery. These include the requirement to use large 18/0 circle hooks with up to a 10° offset and mackerel-type bait. Although not explicitly described under action alternatives, the HMSMT suggests that seabird mitigation measures comparable to Hawaii's be included and that skippers be required to attend workshops presented by NMFS Protected Resources Division.

The HMSMT recommends the Council consider the use of a limited entry permit application and issuance process. Given the Council's previous experience with limited entry in the groundfish management plan, the HMSMT recommends the Council considers the use of an initial application window for those who might qualify for a permit, followed by a length of time during which applicants could be ranked (see discussion in section 2.2.3.1 of the SEIS).