

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FINAL
APPROVAL OF RESUBMITTED EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT (EFP) APPLICATION

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) recommends the Council approve the issuance of an exempted fishing permit (EFP) to the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries. The applicants in this EFP have made several revisions to this EFP since the last Council meeting in March of this year. The HMSAS, the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT), The Nature Conservancy and Environmental Defense Fund believe that these revisions make for a stronger proposal because the revised proposal addresses the issues the HMSMT identified in March. These revisions include, but are not limited to, some important and innovative drift gillnet (DGN) gear modifications such as:

- 1) installation of 50 percent more acoustic pingers;
- 2) breakaways on the net allowing large mammals to break through the gear;
- 3) shortening soak times to only 6 hrs; and
- 4) shortening the net to 900 fathoms.

The HMSAS believes the issuance of this permit is justified for several reasons. First, this EFP would allow the applicants to test net extenders for the first time within the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area. Second, this EFP is justified because fishermen can demonstrate the ability to go where the fish are without catching turtles or marine mammals.

Recent stock assessments indicate that the swordfish stock, which is targeted off the U.S. West Coast, is underutilized. In order to encourage the rebuilding of the swordfish fishing fleet and recruitment of young fishermen into this fishery, we need to demonstrate an economically viable and environmentally sound fishery such as the DGN fishery.

PFMC
06/13/15