

REPORT ON ONGOING EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

At the March and June 2015 meetings, the Council recommended that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issue exempted fishing permits (EFPs) based on submitted applications. In making the recommendations the Council also identified additional conditions that should be placed on the proposed fishing activities. (The applications may be found in the March 2015 briefing book, [Agenda Item H.3](#), and the June 2015 briefing book, [Agenda Item E.2](#). The [Decision Summary Documents](#) for those meetings describe the Council recommendations.) The five applications covered the following activities:

1. Test pelagic longline gear inside the west coast Exclusive Economic Zone (Pete Dupuy, John Gibbs, David Haworth)
2. Test deep-set buoy gear (Pfleger Institute of Environmental Research (PIER), Tim and Laura Ferguson, Stephen R. Mintz)
3. Test modified large mesh drift gillnet gear in the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area at times and places during the closure period when bycatch risk is low and target species abundance is high (Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries)

Agenda Item F.2.b, NMFS Report describes the status of the processing of the pelagic longline gear and eco-triggered drift gillnet fishing EFP applications. Fishing has occurred under the PIER and Tim and Laura Ferguson EFPs to test deep-set buoy gear. PIER has also requested an extension of its EFP to allow fishing in the 2016/17 season. Dr. Chuguey Sepulveda is scheduled to give an update on results of the PIER EFP to date.

There have been questions about the separation and connectivity of the NMFS Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) process and the EFP process, with regard to the use of deep-set buoy gear. NMFS issued a LOA for PIER to research modifications to deep-set buoy gear. (50 CFR 600.745(a) describing procedures and criteria for authorizing scientific research activities and exempted fishing. This section of federal regulations is excerpted in Attachment 1.) Dr. Sepulveda will also brief the Council on this research.

Agenda Item F.2.b, NMFS Report also describes the LOA process, LOAs issued in 2015, and the LOA for PIER's research activities.

The Council may wish to make additional recommendations to NMFS on issuing pending EFPs, the extension of the PIER EFP, or the Letter of Acknowledgement for PIER's research activities.

Council Action:

Consider Current Status of Exempted Fishing Permits in West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fisheries, Make Recommendations on Issuance or Extensions, Comment on Letter of Acknowledgement for Gear Research.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 1: 50 CFR 600.745, Scientific research activity, exempted fishing, and exempted educational activity.
2. Agenda Item F.2.b: NMFS Report.
3. Agenda Item F.2.c, Public Comment: EcoCast: Real Time Data Tools for Dynamic Fisheries Management Progress Report.

Agenda Order:

- F.2 Report on Ongoing Exempted Fishing Permits Kit Dahl
- a. PIER EFP Report Chugey Sepulveda
 - b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. **Council Action:** Consider Current Status of Exempted Fishing Permits in West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fisheries, Make Recommendations on Issuance or Extensions, Comment on Letter of Acknowledgement for Gear Research

PFMC
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