

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT
ON FUTURE MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING
FOR HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ISSUES

Given that there is minimal time available on future meeting agendas, and that the workload of Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and NMFS staff working on highly migratory species (HMS) issues is already approaching capacity for 2016, NMFS is looking to the Council to prioritize the list of HMS actions to be considered during upcoming Council meetings. A prioritization of HMS actions has the potential to free up a significant amount of time on both the Council's June agenda and future agendas, and will allow NMFS to plan their workload accordingly.

NMFS agrees with the HMS Management Team ([March 2016 Report](#)) regarding the need for scheduling a June "check-in" on the Amendment for Deep-Set Buoy Gear (DSBG action). Additional discussions under this agenda item should then focus on priority-setting for the following three "candidate" agenda items: "Federal HMS Permit" (Permit action), "Authorizing a Shallow-set Longline Fishery" (SSLL action), and the "Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan" (SMMP). NMFS has already factored the workload associated with the DSBG action into its plans based on Council discussions during the November 2015 and March 2016 meetings, which illuminated this action as a priority above other "candidate" HMS agenda items. As expressed in the DSBG discussions during the March meeting (Agenda Item F.3), there are some substantive parallels between the DSBG and Permit actions. Further, scoping materials have been developed ([June 2014 Agenda Item E.2.b, Supplemental NMFS-CDFW Report](#)) and Council discussions have occurred for both of these actions; thus, the schedules and workload for these actions may be combined more easily than others to minimize the demand for time on the Council's agenda.

NMFS provides the following workload considerations and recommendations regarding the appearance of "candidate" HMS actions on future Council agendas: NMFS supports pairing the DSBG and HMS Permit actions, as doing so could result in time savings on future Council meeting agendas and minimize the need for reprioritizing current workloads; NMFS supports revisiting the SSLL action in 2017; and NMFS regards the current status of the SMMP as sufficient in providing enough direction to continue working on other swordfish actions in 2016 into 2017 and would rank this agenda item as low priority.

In regards to current workload, and as a reminder to Council staff, NMFS is engaged in the development of the required analyses and proposed rulemaking for the Hard Cap action, Longline Exempted Fishing Permit, and Drift Gillnet Exempted Fishing Permit.