



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Herbert A. Pollard II, Chair | Charles A. Tracy, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 23, 2016

TO: Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel, Highly Migratory Species Management Team, and Interested Persons

FROM: Dr. Kit Dahl, Staff Officer for Highly Migratory Species

SUBJECT: September Council Meeting

The Council meets September 15-20, 2016, at the Riverside Hotel in Boise, Idaho. The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will meet Saturday through Monday, September 17-19. The HMSAS will be in the North Star Room and the HMSMT will be in the Liberty Room. The meetings begin at 8 a.m. each day. Five HMS topics are on the Council agenda. I have also included the briefing materials for Agenda Item G.6, Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning. Summaries of these topics follow.

J.1 Update on International Issues

The results of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee (NC) meeting, August 29-September 2, will be reported on. During the NC meeting, a joint Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)/NC working group meeting is scheduled to discuss a common long-term management framework for Pacific bluefin tuna. The IATTC is resuming its plenary October 12-14. Of particular interest with respect to both these meetings is the development of a Pacific-wide approach to rebuilding Pacific bluefin tuna. The IATTC's current Resolution for Pacific bluefin expires this year and it must adopt a new measure at its October meeting. Similarly, the IATTC must adopt a new measure for management of longline and purse seine fisheries for tropical tunas (bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin).

J.2 Exempted Fishing Permits

In June, the Council received an exempted fishing permit (EFP) application from Mr. David Stephens to test deep-set buoy gear. The HMSMT and HMSAS reviewed the application in June and made recommendations to the Council for revisions. Mr. Stephens has submitted a revised application responding to these comments, and the Council is scheduled to make a final recommendations on the EFP at this meeting. The HMSMT has submitted a report with additional

recommendations based on their August 8-11 meeting, which is included in the briefing materials. In June, the Council also decided it would accept applications for EFPs to test deep-set buoy gear at any Council meeting when HMS items are on the agenda. As of the advanced briefing book deadline, no additional applications had been received.

J.3 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures

At the June Council meeting, the Council assigned several tasks to the HMSMT relevant to the biennial process. These are: 1) to identify “housekeeping” changes to the HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to remove inaccurate or out-of-date information, 2) clarify how management reference points will be specified consistent with the HMS FMP framework, and 3) recommend how to respond to the requests contained in the Center for Biological Diversity’s (CBD) petition for additional domestic actions regarding Pacific bluefin tuna that National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) referred to the Council.

Management reference points identified in the HMS FMP include maximum sustainable yield, optimum yield, and status determination criteria. According to the HMS FMP, up-to-date values for these reference points are to be published in the Stock Assessment Fisheries Evaluation (SAFE) document annually. This process could dovetail with NMFS’ stock status determination process and notification of NMFS status determinations (overfishing occurring, stock overfished).

The HMSMT discussed these issues at its August meeting and submitted a report for the advanced briefing book outlining proposed FMP edits. The HMSMT will submit a supplemental report dealing with management reference point specification and potential responses to NMFS’ referral of the CBD petition.

In a letter from NMFS, the Council has been notified that NMFS has determined that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean (WCNPO) striped marlin stock is subject to overfishing and is overfished. This triggers the requirement in the Magnuson-Stevens Act for the Council to respond with recommended actions within one year. Based on the stock boundary, it is unlikely that HMS FMP fisheries catch the WCNPO stock. Furthermore, under the HMS FMP, commercial landings of striped marlin are prohibited. While additional domestic management measures may not be necessary, this notification does offer the opportunity for the Council to make recommendations on international management of the stock.

J.4 Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permit Criteria to Advance Gear Authorization

In June, the Council directed the HMSMT to identify key data gaps relevant to authorizing a deep-set buoy gear fishery, which could be used as criteria for evaluating EFP applications. EFP applicants would also be encouraged to submit applications addressing these data gaps. The Council also asked for a list of potential incentives to encourage people to submit EFP applications to test deep-set buoy gear. The HMSMT discussed these issues at its August meeting and will submit a supplemental report with recommendations.

J.5 Federal Drift Gillnet Permit Amendment

In June, the Council decided to rapidly move forward to convert the current California State limited entry permit for large mesh drift gillnet to a Federal limited entry permit under the HMS FMP.

The Council identified two alternatives, no action and an action alternative of implementing a Federal permit that only fishers authorized to fish with large-mesh drift gillnet gear under state law would be entitled to obtain. They directed the HMSMT to further develop the range of alternatives. At their August meeting, the HMSMT drafted a description of the proposed action and its purpose and need that reflected the Council's desire to rapidly transition from the State permit to a Federal permit. The HMSMT decided the two alternatives proposed by the Council are sufficient to meet this objective, recognizing that subsequent actions would address latent permits and permit transferability. The HMSMT drafted a report on this topic for inclusion in the advanced briefing materials.

To help you keep abreast of topics at future Council meetings, I am also including the materials for Agenda Item G.6, Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning.

Paper copies of referenced briefing materials are enclosed. You may obtain electronic copies of all the meeting materials on our website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/briefing-books/>. We also post supplemental briefing materials on our website as they become available after distribution of the advanced briefing book.

Fun fact: "Breaking Bad" star Aaron Paul is from Boise, Centennial High School Class of 1998. As always, thank you for your service to the Council process.

KRD:kma

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.5: Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Item J.1: Update on International Issues
3. Agenda Item J.2: Exempted Fishing Permits
4. Agenda Item J.3: Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures
5. Agenda Item J.4: Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permit Criteria to Advance Gear Authorization
6. Agenda Item J.5: Federal Drift Gillnet Permit Amendment
7. Agenda Item G.6: Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning
8. HMSAS and HMSMT Meeting Agendas
9. Hotel-related Information
10. Council Roster
11. Informational Report 3, FY17 Saltonstall-Kennedy Federal Funding Opportunity

PFMC

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