

Deep-Set Buoy Gear Authorization and Permitting

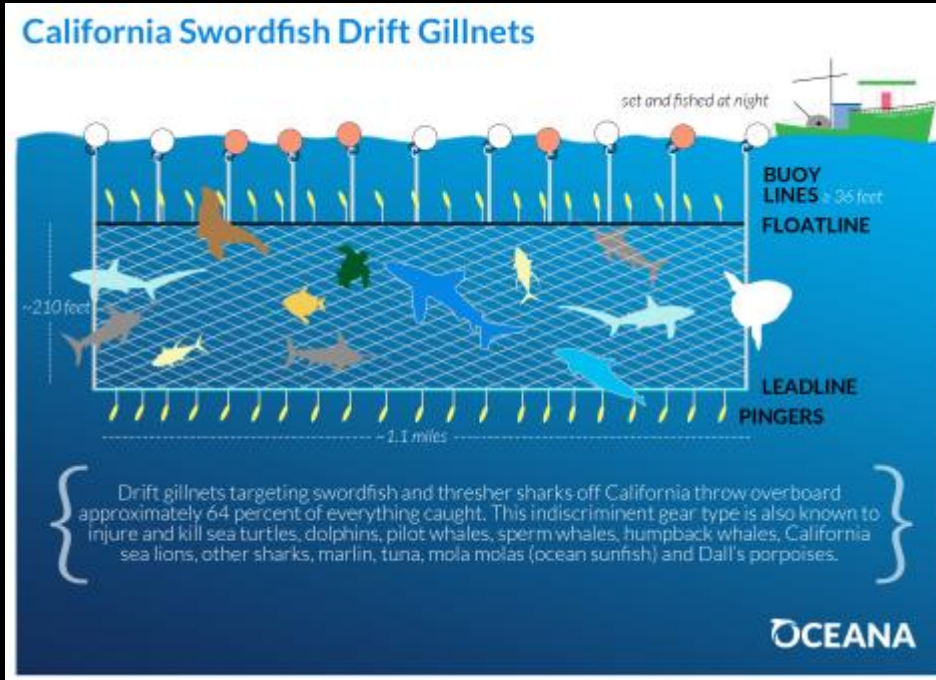
Comments on Agenda Item H.3

Geoff Shester

June 13, 2017

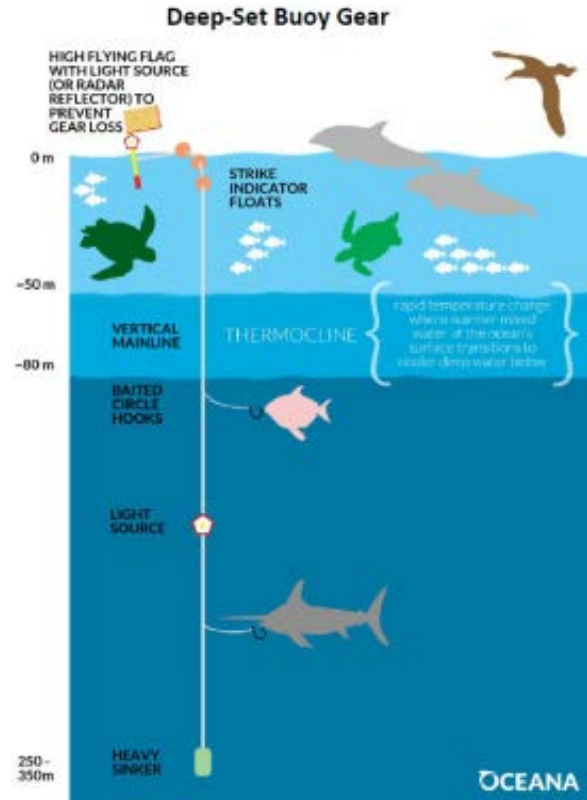


Night



Drift gillnets

- Surface fishing at night
- Among highest discard rates in US (>60%)
- More cetacean bycatch than all other US West Coast and Alaska fisheries combined
- Only MMPA Category I fishery on US West Coast
- No hard cap rule; no monitoring rule



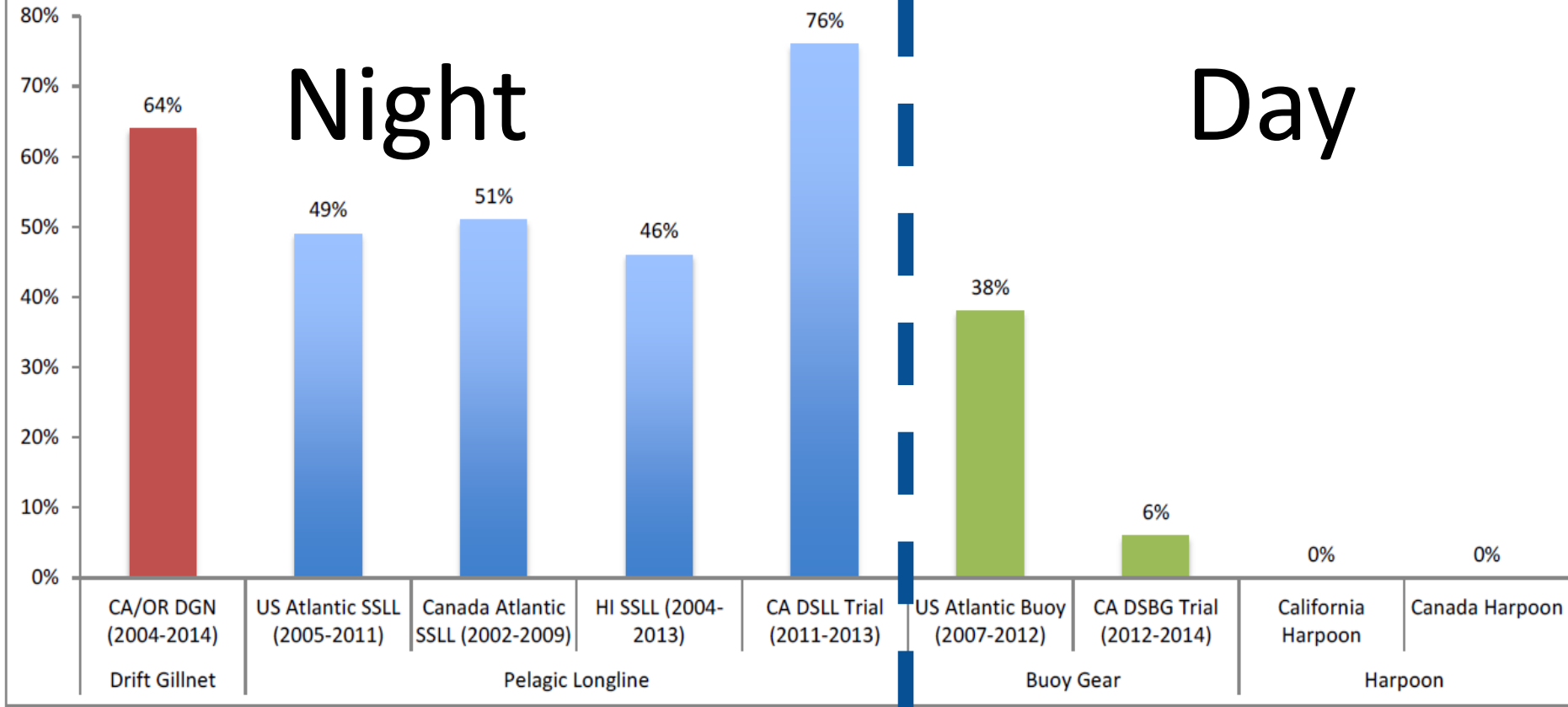
Deep-set buoy gear

- Deep fishing in day
- 98% marketable species
- Active tending → Minimal bycatch mortality
- Profitable, higher value catch

Swordfish Fishery Discard Rates

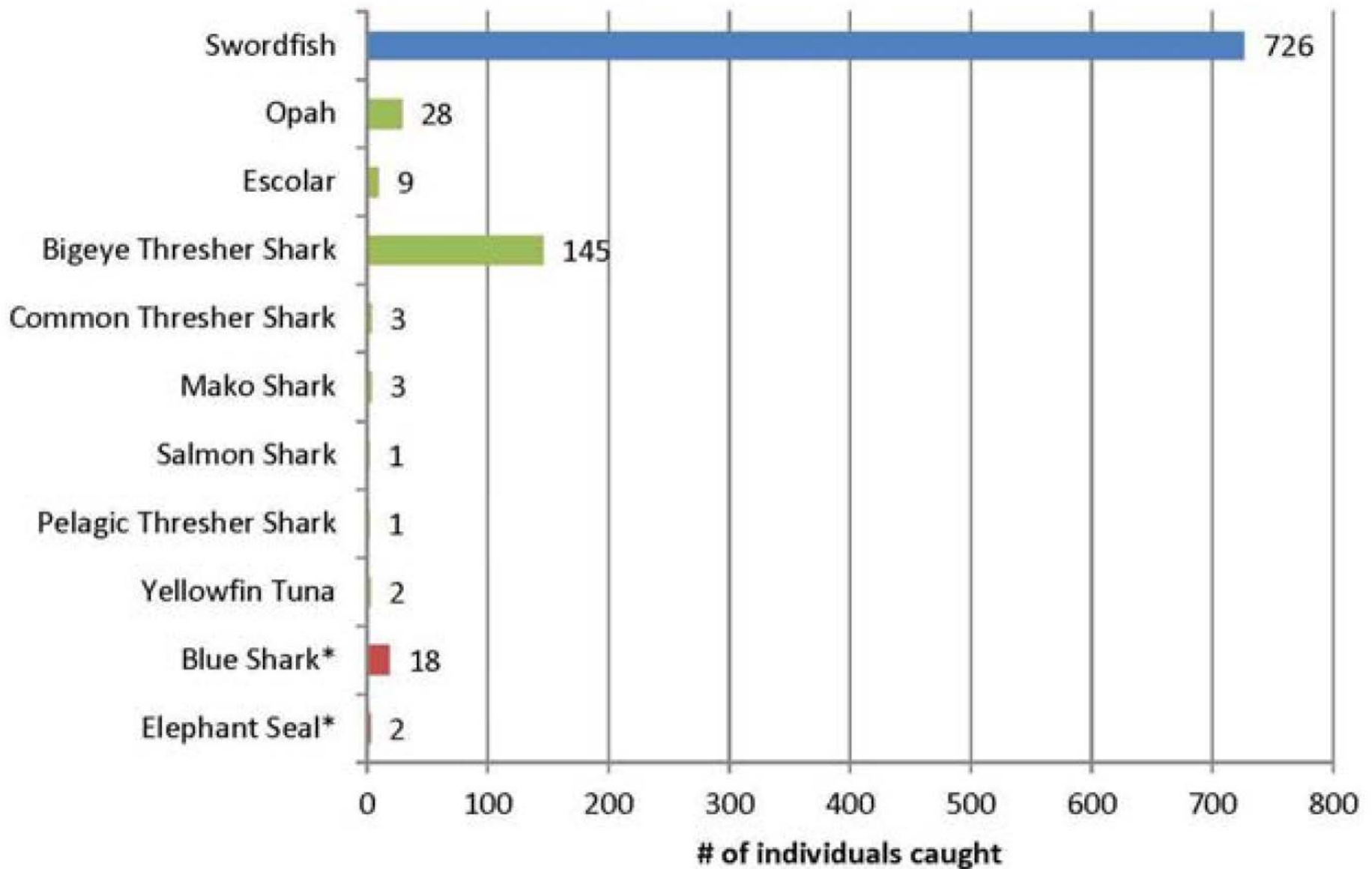
Night

Day

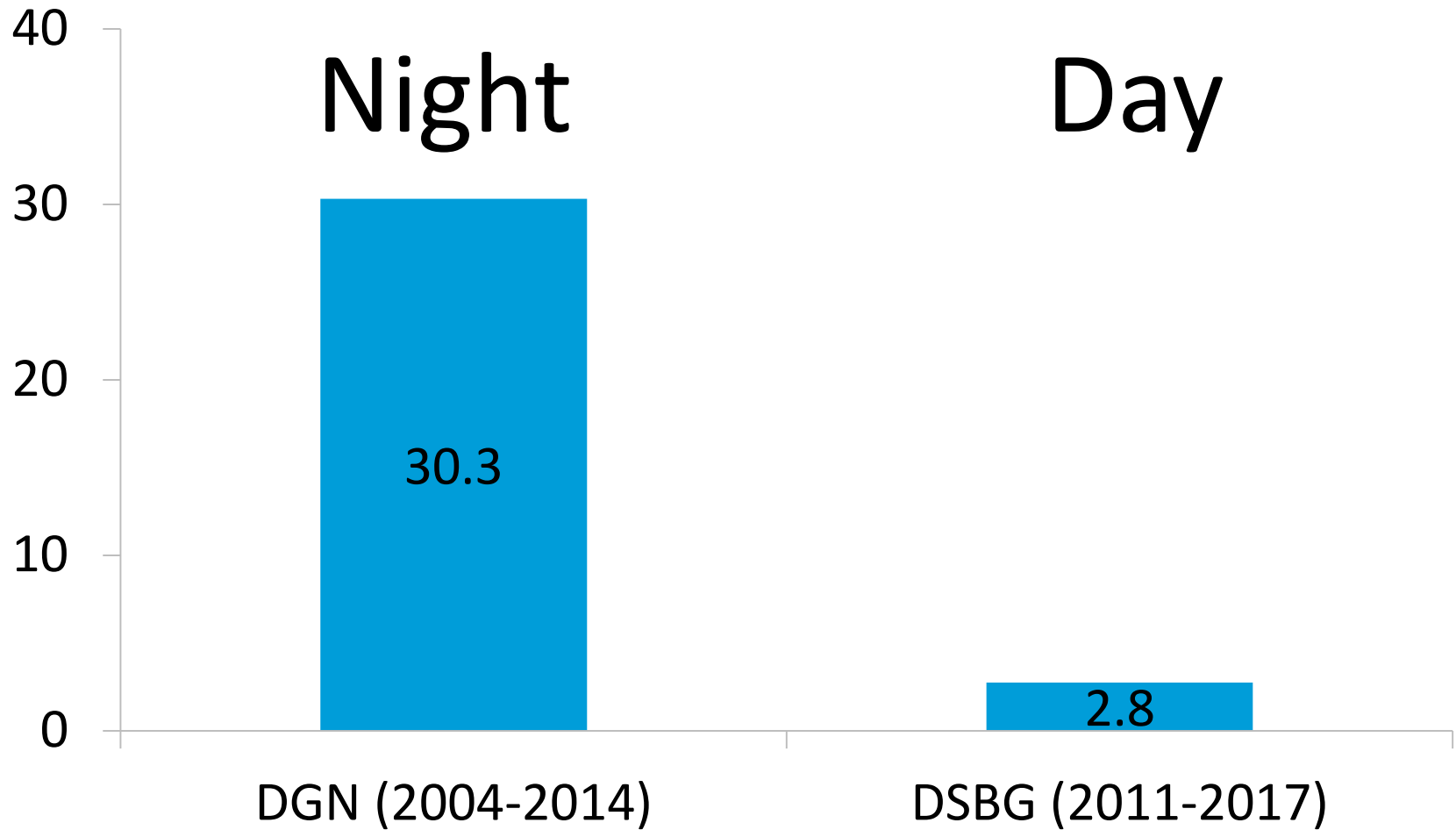


This chart details discard rates (percentage of the total catch that is thrown overboard) using different gear types to target swordfish in North American oceans. SSL = shallow-set longline, DSLL = deep-set longline, DSBG = deep-set buoy gear

PIER Deep-Set Buoy Gear Trials + EFP Catch 2011-Jan. 2017
81% Swordfish, 98% marketable catch



Marine Mammal Takes per 1000 Swordfish



Purpose and Need

- Increase domestic swordfish landings and *reduce bycatch*.
- Authorize deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) and establish a federal limited entry DSBG program.
- Provide incentives to transition from drift gillnet (DGN) gear to DSBG.
- Provide compensation for DGN permit holders who voluntarily retire their permits.



DSBG Authorization – A Top Priority

- Achieve bycatch reduction goals in light of NMFS' withdrawal of DGN hard caps
- Large number of EFP applications signals significant interest in the fishery
- Reduced fishing costs relative to EFP fishing costs due to EFP requirement that fishermen pay for observers
- Increase U.S. West Coast swordfish production

Authorizing DSBG



- Use configuration and areas as fished in previous EFPs by PIER and others
 - 10 buoys/vessel, 3 circle hooks/buoy, 1 permit/vessel
 - Active tending (3 nm maximum distance from gear)
 - Day use only, below thermocline
- Allow for modifying gear definition to allow for linked buoy gear upon future review of EFP results in biennial specs

Rationale for Limited Entry

- Broad authority to establish limited entry under MSA to achieve Optimum Yield 16 U.S.C. § 1853(b)(6)
- 50 CFR 600.330(c): Limited entry may be used to
 - “contribute to economic efficiency or conservation.”
 - “combat overfishing, overcrowding, or overcapitalization” or in an “unutilized or underutilized fishery,” to “reduce the chance that these conditions will adversely affect the fishery in the future.”
 - “to provide adequate economic return to pioneers in a new fishery.”

Initial permit issuance

- EFP participants with active effort
 - Pioneers who have innovated and invested in gear viability and providing data for management
- DGN permit holders
 - Reduce bycatch and achieve OY
 - Provide an alternative gear type to fish swordfish
 - Partially or fully replace DGN use with minimal bycatch

Permit trade-ins

- Mandatory
 - All DGN permits become DSBG-only permits
 - Time certain
 - Upon permit transfer
- Voluntary
 - All DGN permit holders have option to trade-in DGN permit in exchange for one or more DSBG permits
- Suboption for analysis:
 - Only active DGN permit holders can trade in

CDFW Nov 2016 HMS Report

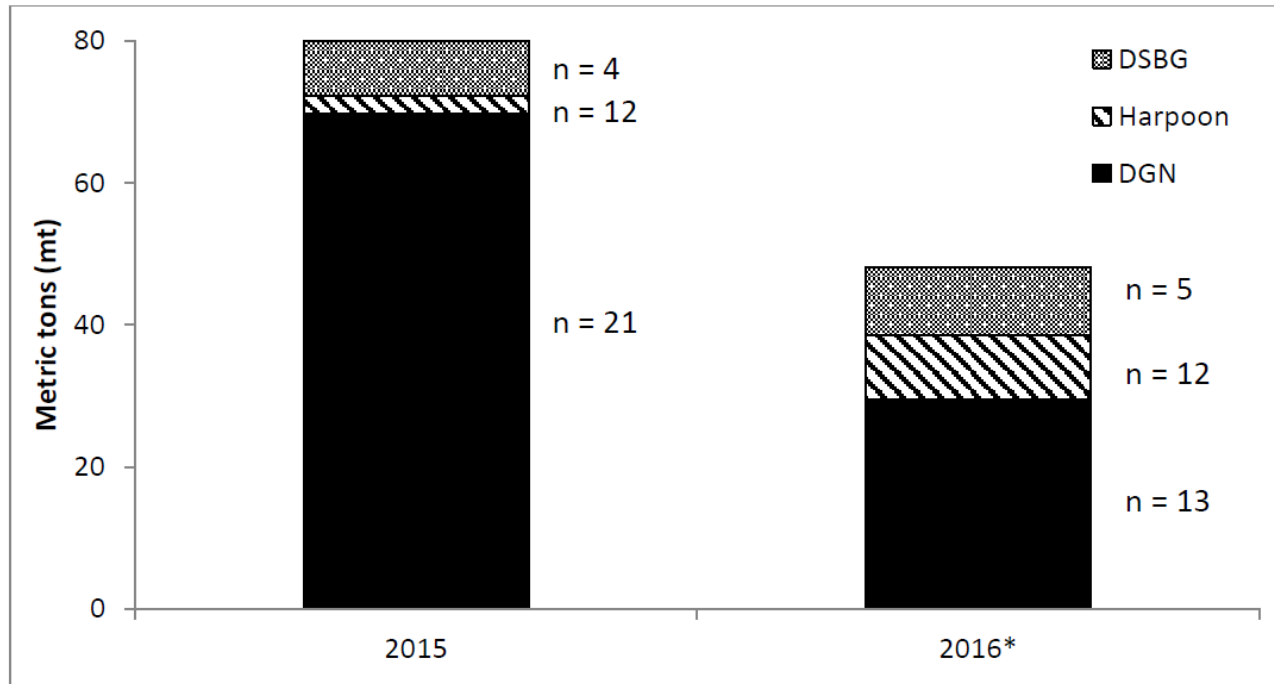


Figure 7. Swordfish landings by DGN, Harpoon and DSBG in California ports, 2015-2016.

Data source: CDFW Commercial Fisheries Information System (CFIS) extracted 10/13/16. All 2016 data are preliminary. n = Active vessels

Summary

- DSBG is the best available path to a sustainable West Coast swordfish fishery
- Move forward now to authorize and establish a limited entry DSBG permit program with a DGN trade-in component
- New opportunity to fish with clean gear and reduce bycatch

