

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON VESSEL
MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS) DECLARATION REGULATIONS

Resolution C-04-06 adopted by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) requires VMS on tuna-fishing vessels over 24 meters. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) identified two mechanisms to implement this requirement for U.S. vessels: under the Tuna Conventions Act or under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) through the council process. NMFS is offering the Council an opportunity to comment on the appropriate mechanism.

NMFS previously provided information to the PFMC (Agenda Item I.1.b, Attachment 1, March 2013) on implementation of this resolution and the potential number of U.S. tuna-fishing vessels that may be affected. Updated information provided by NMFS to the HMSMT indicates that approximately 35 West Coast vessels over 24 meters are permitted to fish for tuna in the IATTC Convention area during 2013. Of these, 18 vessels already have VMS, so there may be only 17 vessels that would be required to obtain VMS to fish for tuna.

The HMSMT does not have a preference for the mechanism to implement the requirements as long as there is an adequate process for public notification and comment. The HMSMT notes that the MSA process may take into consideration state and federal arrangements for data sharing. The HMSMT understands that implementation under the Tuna Conventions Act may be completed more quickly and will include at least a meeting or conference call with affected constituents, as well as an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking, which offers public comment opportunity.

PFMC
06/20/13