

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT
EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT (EFP) PROCESS

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) advises that during the last 15 years, the increase in restrictive regulations has created the reduction in active drift gillnet (DGN) permits. DGN fishermen need access to waters that have been diminished to the situation that we have today. That situation is that there is only a small area available only off the Southern California Coast that has space for a limited number of vessel to realistically operate. Given the presentation under Agenda Item E.2.b, Supplemental Highly Migratory Species Management Team Report, and the experience of the West Coast DGN fishermen, the proposal of harpoon gear is not economically feasible. The experimental use of buoy gear/mousetraps for the last three years has not been proven to be economically sustainable. The only proven alternative for an economically feasible and potentially less bycatch fishery is a pelagic longline fishery in the Exclusive Economic Zone. If an exempted fishing permit is approved to compare bycatch between two different gear types, then both gear types need to operate in the same area at the same time for accurate comparison. If the longline fishery is successfully permitted, the HMSAS suggests that the current DGN permitted license holders should have first option to the permitted licenses.

PFMC
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