

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES REGULATORY ACTIVITIES

Pacific Bluefin Tuna Petition

At the June 2014 Council meeting, NMFS announced the receipt of the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) petition requesting that the U.S. Department of Commerce promulgate regulations that prohibit fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna and to identify specific reference points used to determine if overfishing is occurring or if the stock is overfished. The Notice published in the Federal Register on Thursday, July 24, 2014. Comments will be accepted through September 22, 2014. More information can be found here: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-07-24/html/2014-17431.htm>. (Note that the Council may provide comments on the petition under Agenda Item G.4, New or Routine Management Measures for Highly Migratory Species Fisheries.)

HMS Control Date

At its March 2014 meeting, the Council started discussion of a new control date pertaining to the large-mesh drift gillnet (DGN) fishery. During further discussion at its June 2014 meeting, the Council heard that the State of California issued 72 DGN permits in 2013, with approximately 25 of those considered actively fished since 2010. They requested that NMFS publish June 23, 2014 as the potential new control date for determining historical or traditional participation in the DGN fishery should they decide to create a Federal limited access permit for the fishery. NMFS is in the process a publishing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register.

Loggerhead Closure

On July 25, 2014, NMFS announced an in-season closure (79 FR 43628) that prohibits fishing with large mesh drift gillnet (DGN) gear (>14 in mesh) off the coast of southern California east of 120° West meridian through August 31, 2014. This prohibition is based on the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries' determination that El Niño conditions are occurring off the coast of southern California. This action protects Endangered Species Act listed loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*), specifically the endangered North Pacific Ocean Distinct Population Segment.

Shark finning letter to fleet from NOAA GC

NMFS is preparing a Notice to the Fleet in conjunction with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to clarify current federal and state laws related to the catch and landing of sharks, particularly thresher sharks.