

Pacific Fishery Management Council



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Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

July 02, 2014

RE: Exempted Fishing Permits to Test Alternative Gears and/or New Approaches or Methods for the California Large Mesh Drift Net Fishery

Dear Interested Participant:

The purpose of this letter is to (1) provide notice and guidance regarding the development of Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) proposals to test alternative fishing gear as a substitute in the large mesh drift net (DGN) fishery, or test new approaches or methods of fishing DGN gear, and (2) provide notice of the timeline for EFP submission to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council). Successful applicants would be exempted from fishing regulations currently in effect but required to fish in accordance with provisions of an approved EFP.

At its June 2014 meeting, the Council adopted objectives and a process to guide consideration of EFP proposals pursuant to the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP). In the most general sense, the objective of this EFP process is to obtain information that could lead to regulations for a full fleet commercially viable fishery targeting healthy HMS species, such as swordfish or certain tuna or shark species, while significantly reducing the bycatch from what has been observed in the contemporary DGN fishery. The process includes initial consideration of EFP applications at the September 2014 Council meeting in Spokane, Washington and final action of the EFP applications at the November 2014 Council meeting in Costa Mesa, California.

Several sources of information may be useful to EFP applicants in designing an EFP proposal that can achieve the above general objective.

- Council Operating Procedure 20 (attached) provides details of the process, objectives, and evaluation criteria for EFP proposals. However, the Council has modified the schedule for the review of EFPs in 2014 (see below) and identified additional criteria that will be used to evaluate submitted proposals (see below).
- At its June 2014 Council meeting, the Council identified several policy goals to shape future West Coast swordfish fisheries; see page 3 of <http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/0614decisions.pdf>.
- The Council also indicated it would consider additional evaluation criteria for these EFP proposals as proposed by the HMS Management Team (HMSMT) (attached and

available at http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/E3b_SUP_HMSMT_Rpt_JUNE2014BB.pdf and http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/E3b_SUP_HMSMT_Rpt_JUNE2014BB.pdf).

- All EFP activities should be designed for 100 percent monitoring. Applicants should express their willingness to test electronic monitoring systems and your willingness and ability to pay the costs associated with observer coverage.
- There is precursory and peripheral information on the issue of pursuing a viable commercial fishery for healthy HMS stocks, particularly swordfish, with significantly less bycatch of non-target species available in the Briefing Book materials for the March 2014 and June 2014 Council meetings (see the HMS agenda items at <http://www.pcouncil.org/resources/archives/briefing-books/march-2014-briefing-book/> and <http://www.pcouncil.org/resources/archives/briefing-books/june-2014-briefing-book/#June2014>, respectively).

Applicants should be aware of additional details on the full EFP process. The Council will conduct a preliminary review of submitted proposals at its September 12-17, 2014, meeting in Spokane, Washington. This review will include the Council taking statements from its Scientific and Statistical Committee, HMSMT, HMS Advisory Subpanel, and Enforcement Consultant advisory bodies, as well as hearing advice from the public, before making a decision on which EFPs would be forwarded for further detailed evaluation and a final Council decision at the November 14-19, 2014, Council meeting in Costa Mesa, California; the Council may also request applicants refine portions of their application prior to further consideration at the November 2014 Council meeting. Final Council approval of EFPs are then submitted to National Marine Fisheries Service as a recommendation for final determination and issuance of the EFP.

By this letter, the Council announces a deadline of 11:59 p.m. PDT, August 17, 2014, to submit EFP proposals to the Council office, addressed as follows:

By mail:

Dr. Donald McIsaac,
7700 NE Ambassador Pl. Suite, 101
Portland, OR 97220

By fax: 503-820-2299

By email: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov or kit.dahl@noaa.gov

On envelope, fax cover sheet, or email subject line please enter "Attn: HMS EFP Proposal." In the event an EFP proposal does not meet the above deadline, it does not necessarily mean the Council will not consider the proposal; however, lack of inclusion in the advance Briefing Book for the September Council meeting may mean no advisory body review, less time for serious consideration by Council members, and a dramatically reduced chance of the Council advancing the proposal to the next step.

Should you have any questions on this matter, please contact Dr. Kit Dahl at kit.dahl@noaa.gov or 503-820-2422.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. O. McIsaac", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

KRD:kam

C: Council Members
Highly Migratory Species Management Team
Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel
Dr. Kit Dahl

Attachments:

[Council Operating Procedure 20](#)

[Agenda Item E.3.b, HMSMT Report](#)

[Agenda Item E.3.b, Supplemental HMSMT Report](#)