

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON COMMENTS ON  
EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) requests the Council to strongly oppose the proposed expansion of the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument proposed by President Obama on June 17, 2014.

The proposed expansion would prohibit legal U.S. fisheries to operate in traditional areas. Nearly 700,000 square miles will be affected. Such fisheries pose no threat to the ecosystems of the proposed closed zones and never have. Fish caught in these areas are generally highly migratory in nature, transcend boundaries, and are managed internationally. Thus, closing down large areas would result in no eco-benefit and may create negative results by forcing fleets to fish in smaller, more crowded areas which would not be beneficial to the stocks of fish.

While the proposed expansion and closures of areas do not directly affect west coast fisheries, it sets a bad precedent as more and more access for U.S. fishermen are being lost. With more closed areas, increased effort could spread to west coast fisheries. The HMSAS recognizes the potential problems when decisions are not based on sound science with little data to support the decisions that are being implemented by political pressure.

Implementation will only further expand outsourcing domestic seafood demand to nations whose standards for environmental protections pale in comparison to our own. The U.S. now imports over 91% of its seafood and this will only help to increase this number.

U.S. fisheries are the best managed in the world and losing access to large areas of production only will create a further gap in the U.S. as an importer of foreign-caught and processed seafood.

The HMSAS asks the Pacific Fishery Management Council, as has the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council to take a firm position and make a statement that this proposal be withdrawn in order to avoid further degradation of the American fishing industry.

PFMC  
09/14/14