

DRIFT GILLNET HARD CAPS AND OTHER PRIORITIES FOR 2015-2016 FISHERIES

The schedule for adopting management measures in the biennial process is described in the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fisheries (HMS FMP). Normally the Council takes final action in November. However, recognizing the delayed start to the process for this biennial cycle, the urgency of addressing Pacific Bluefin Tuna issues, and the complexity of the hard caps issue, the Council decided to defer final action on hard caps until March 2015. At this meeting, the Council should confirm the written direction on the California large mesh drift gillnet (DGN) fishery hard caps and other adopted priorities, as well as providing guidance on workload expectations and Council action scheduling.

DGN hard Caps

At its September meeting, the Council adopted a range of alternatives and identified a preliminary preferred alternative for establishing hard caps (take caps) for the DGN fishery. Hard caps would apply to selected protected species, along with other measures aimed at finfish bycatch reduction and fishery monitoring. At this meeting, the Council should review the description of the range of alternatives in Attachment 1. This document is based on the motion, as amended, which was described in writing at the time of adoption. The Council should confirm that the description accurately reflects Council intent in September or, if necessary, offer corrections. The Council may wish to consider the following questions in refining the range of alternatives, providing workload guidance, or setting schedule expectations.

1. Currently, National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Resources Division assesses Mortality/Serious Injury (M/SI) after the fishing season is over; how would M/SI be assessed at the time of the encounter in order to enable potential inseason closure of the fishery?
2. With partial observer coverage, how would observed M/SI be expanded to an estimated total?
3. What would be the process to trigger a fishery closure based on hitting a hard cap?
4. What would be the response if protected species and finfish bycatch performance objectives / reduction targets are not met?
5. What species should be considered under finfish bycatch reduction Alternative 3 (modify Alternatives 1 and 2 to apply to a subset of bycatch species and/or set targets for groups of species) and how target/threshold numbers be determined?
6. Given the large volume of public comment received at the September 2014 Council meeting under Agenda Item G.4.c, which comments does the Council want to include as part of the range of alternatives for finfish bycatch performance objectives?
7. Are there priorities within the assumed workload to bring as many matters as possible forward for final Council action at the March 2015 Council meeting?
8. Is there clarity of workload expectations in implementing Council action taken at the March 2015 Council meeting by the start of the DGN fishery August 15, 2015?

Other Adopted HMS Priorities

In addition to moving forward with hard cap management, the Council identified the following issues to consider outside the current biennial process:

1. Achieve fishing opportunity comparable to the Hawaii shallow-set longline fishery for HMS permit holders using longline gear outside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
2. Authorize a pelagic longline fishery inside the EEZ, which is currently prohibited by the HMS FMP.
3. Transition the current California limited entry permit program for DGN vessels to a Federal limited entry permit program under the HMS FMP.

Consideration of authorizing a shallow-set longline fishery outside the EEZ and transitioning the DGN fishery to a Federal limited entry permit program have been tentatively scheduled on the June 2015 Council agenda (see Agenda Item C.9.a, Attachment 1). As in the case of the DGN hard cap issue, the Council should confirm the descriptions of intent on these other adopted priorities, consider guidance on points of workload emphasis, and discuss desired scheduling of the individual issues.

Council Action:

Consider Associated Workload and Scheduling Issues for Drift Gillnet Hard Caps and Other Adopted Priority Issues as Necessary.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item I.4.a, Attachment 1: Range of Alternatives for Protected Species Hard Caps, Finfish Bycatch Reduction, and Enhanced Monitoring in the California Large Mesh Drift Gillnet Fishery Adopted at the September 2014 Council Meeting.
2. Agenda Item I.4.c, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kit Dahl
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Consider Associated Workload and Scheduling Issues for Drift Gillnet Hard Caps and Other Adopted Priority Issues as Necessary

PFMC
10/24/14