

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICES REPORT

Proposed Rule to Implement Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Resolution C-13-01 for the Conservation of Tropical Tunas in the Eastern Pacific Ocean

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) would like to bring to the Council's attention that in 2013, for the first time, our West Coast longline fishermen were shut down three months early because the U.S. quota for bigeye tuna for the Eastern Pacific of 500 mt was reached prior to the end of the season. The reason for closing the Eastern Pacific bigeye fishery early was because the Hawaiian fleet caught the U.S. Western Pacific quota allowance earlier and moved to the Eastern Pacific sooner than usual. The recent actions in further reducing the US Western Pacific bigeye longline quota by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission in Cairns is going to further exacerbate the situation and lead to longer closures for the Eastern Pacific west coast longline fishermen. We ask the Council to notify National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) that this is unfair to our West Coast fishermen, as they do not have access to the Western Pacific bigeye quota and look for ways prevent discrimination against the West Coast fishermen compared to the Hawaiian fishermen as prescribed by the National Standards.

NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center Activities

The HMSAS raised a concern regarding a potential movement to declare a critical habitat for loggerhead turtles and fishery restrictions because of an occasional loggerhead turtle in the California Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The HMSAS feels that there may not be scientific justification for this action and requests Highly Migratory Species Management Team to provide guidance on this important concern. Because the Southwest Fisheries Science Center is currently working with the occurrence rate and reference points for leatherback turtles, we suggest that at the same time the scientist should be recording data that will document the occurrence or non-occurrence of loggerhead turtles in the California EEZ.

PFMC
03/11/14