

Federation of Independent Seafood Harvesters

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Pacific Fishery Management Council
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Dear Council Members,

PFMC

After careful consideration, and on behalf of the HMS fishers we represent, FISH endorses the "Separate Council FMP" option delineated in the "White Paper" prepared for the Council by NMFS Southwest Region. Accordingly, FISH supports action by the Council for the institution of a Pacific Coast HMS FMP plan development team and the eventual implementation of a framework FMP at this time.

Although FISH recognizes the value of having joint Council HMS management procedures, FISH also recognizes that such procedures must be structured in a way that preserves regional independence and control where appropriate. In light of the fact that the Southwest Region has proposed such a joint Council structure, with which the West Pacific Council has yet to express any interest in pursuing, FISH believes that the urgent need to consolidate U.S. HMS management interests in the Pacific at this time demands independent action by this Council.

Formation of a separate HMS FMP does not close the door on future joint Council management options, and such options should be pursued at such time they become available.

Of secondary note, the "White Paper" prepared for the Council's review appears to contain some mistakes and inaccuracies. Because of time constraints, I did not have the opportunity to discuss them with NMFS before this paper was distributed. Apart from the question of whether or not these perceived mistakes and inaccuracies are of great consequence, in the interest of providing the most accurate information, I attach these comments, listed under the applicable section numbers, for Council review.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chuck Janisse".

Chuck Janisse

"WHITE PAPER" COMMENTS AND PROPOSED CORRECTIONS:

2.2.1. In the list of other gears catching albacore, purse seine is not included. I believe the wetfish/tuna fleet operating out of San Pedro does land some albacore.

2.2.3.1. The driftnet fleet is attributed with sea bird interactions. I have never heard of even one driftnet/sea bird interaction. I suspect this statement is erroneous. Also in this section, as well as in section 3.3.2. Santa Barbara is listed as a primary port in the driftnet fishery. This isn't the case. I suspect that the CA Fish & Game statistical region of Santa Barbara, which includes the ports of Morro Bay, San Luis, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Channel Islands, and Hueneme, has been mistaken for the port of Santa Barbara.

3.3.1. Drift net vessels are inadvertently excluded from the list of principal vessel types used to fish for HMS off California.

4.1.1.3. Regarding the Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Team, it's stated: "Combined with State-imposed time and area closures, the [Take Reduction] plan has resulted in an overall reduction in fishing intensity...." I'm not sure what this is trying to be said, but it reads like the plan itself has caused drift net fishermen to avoid this fishery. I don't believe this is the case. Although there has been somewhat of a recent reduction in effort in the driftnet fishery, it's most likely due to fishers converting to the more potentially lucrative market squid fishery.

4.2.3. Regarding the statement: "the probability of revitalized participation by US tuna purse seine vessels in the ETP tuna fishery is increased by the new dolphin legislation." It should be noted that the U.S. tuna industry has reportedly advised Secretary Daley that it will not produce tuna harvested by means of dolphin encircling fishery practices. This action reportedly results from threats by a coalition of numerous environmental groups that if the U.S. resumed dolphin encircling fishing, regardless of the new regulations, a boycott of canned tuna would be instituted.

5.2.2.3.1. Under "Sharks" it's stated that California has no directed commercial fishery for mako or thresher sharks. The California shark/swordfish driftnet fishery is a directed thresher shark fishery. There is a Santa Barbara based fleet of small drift net vessels that exclusively target threshers, as well as many other driftnet fishers that specifically target threshers at some times, and swordfish at other times.

6.1 The statement, "Maintaining the current position will avoid imposing additional unilateral management burdens on the US fishermen in the EEZ before multilateral management is negotiated," should be qualified by pointing out that this only applies to federal fishery management. State managed HMS fisheries may still be subjected to unilateral management burdens under a no FMP situation.