

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATEMENT OF PROGRESS REPORT ON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Species Coverage

The Council should direct the Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team (HMSPDT) to focus less on efforts to identify management unit species at this time and focus more on assembling essential information about the species until more specific guidance regarding selection of a management unit is available.

Gear Types

In order to help simplify the gear types covered by the fishery management plan (FMP), the Highly Migratory Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) recommends categorizing gears into the following five groups:

- Surface hook-and-line (includes troll and bait boats).
- Pelagic drift net.
- Pelagic longline.
- Pelagic purse seine.
- Harpoon.

Regulations

The HMSAS recommends the FMP include authority to license all commercial and recreational fishers and processors in the event licenses may be desirable in the future. If licenses are required, there should be one license for highly migratory species (HMS) regardless of where the fish are caught.

There is a need for consistent federal fishing regulations off the West Coast and for uniform data collection requirements to the extent practicable. The states should work together via the Pacific Coast Fisheries Data Committee to try to achieve consistency in data collection and reporting.

Public Outreach

The Council, the states, and the HMSAS members are working to get information to the public concerning this process. These efforts include Council meeting notices, newsletter, and website. The HMSAS encourages the Council to use the website to the maximum extent possible to advertise agendas, meeting schedules, and draft FMP documents as they are developed.

Coordinated Science

The HMSAS recommends the Council ask NMFS to work through the Southwest Fisheries Science Center to coordinate development of uniform maximum sustainable yields (MSYs), overfishing definitions, control rules, and other essential information to be used in both the Western Pacific Pelagic FMP and the Pacific Council HMS FMP.

International Issues

The HMSAS was informed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is recommending basking sharks be added to the list of species covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The HMSAS recommends the Council be kept informed and consulted on such actions.

We would like to take this opportunity to state the importance of including North Pacific HMS fisheries in a multi-national management arrangement as soon as possible. To this end, the HMSAS would like the Council to urge the Department of State to:

- Aggressively pursue the inclusion of these fisheries in the international management process and make sure they are covered in any resulting Western and Central Pacific convention.
- Ensure an appropriate North Pacific Committee is established, as advocated by the U.S. at Multilateral High Level Conference (MHLC) 5, comprised of stakeholder nations.
- Specifically expand the management area now not covered to include the area north of 40° N latitude and east of 150° W longitude.

The Council should strongly recommend the use of a boundary at 50° N latitude for purposes of negotiating MHLC and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) arrangements, as appropriate, since this geographical line would effectively allow the primary HMS species to be managed throughout their ranges.

Next Meeting

The HMSAS would like to meet next on June 29, 2000 in conjunction with the Council meeting in Portland. This assumes the Council would address HMS on Friday, June 30, 2000.

Chair and Vice Chair

The HMSAS intends to make a recommendation to the Council Chair on the HMSAS Chair and Vice Chair at its next meeting.

PFMC
03/09/00