

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
UPDATE ON FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) met from 1 P.M. until 6 P.M. on September 11, 2000 and from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. on September 12, 2000, to consider the items set forth in the HMSAS's agenda. This report summarizes the HMSAS's discussions. A more complete record of discussions will be contained in the summary minutes which will be made available subsequent to this Council meeting. The summary minutes from the last HMSAS meeting on June 29, 2000 is available from the HMSAS.

During the HMSAS's two days of meetings, written reports on **various national and international developments** were submitted for information. These included a report on the last Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team (HMSPDT) meeting in La Jolla, California July 17-20, 2000; two Resolutions from the June 2000 Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting in Panama on a regional vessel register (and accompanying drafts of a NMFS prepared questionnaire and supporting statement) and on bycatch; the final meeting of the Multilateral High Level Conference (MHLC) in Hawaii from August 28-September 6, 2000 which resulted in an international Convention for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific; Turtle Island Restoration Network v. National Marine Fisheries Service (San Francisco); Turtle Island Restoration Network, et al. 60 Day Notice of Intent to Sue under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act dated July 6, 2000; Center for Marine Conservation et al. v. National Marine Fisheries Service (Honolulu); the Steller Sea Lion case in Alaska; consultations under the United States - Canada Pacific Albacore Treaty; and Comments on the March 9, 2000 Control Date *Federal Register* notice (no comments received).

Dr. Sue Smith, NMFS, La Jolla, California made a presentation on the proposed "**Species Monitoring Index**". After this presentation the HMSAS passed a motion to have the HMSPDT write up an explanation of the Species Monitoring Index for submission to the Scientific and Statistical Committee for their review and comment, as soon as possible.

A presentation was made by Dr. David Au, NMFS, La Jolla, California concerning recent efforts which he and Dr. Smith have made to calculate **maximum sustainable yield (MSY)**. It was not clear whether Dr. Au's calculations had been based on data derived from information on log books or on fish landing tickets (fishtickets). Dr. Au will be clarifying this. In addition, it was suggested a written explanation of Dr. Au's and Dr. Smith's work would be beneficial to the HMSAS. It was agreed these items could be discussed further at the HMSPDT meeting scheduled for September 26-28, 2000 in La Jolla.

Mr. Will Dasplit of the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission gave a presentation on Pacific Coast Fisheries Information Network (PacFin) data collection and uses. He was assisted in this presentation by Mr. Gerry Kobylinski, PacFin data manager for California. There followed a discussion of ways to improve data collection. It was pointed out that area of catch information on fishtickets filled out by, or submitted through, fish purchasers was notoriously inaccurate to the point of being useless, at best, and misleading, at worst. The discussion identified the need for an educational program, as well as regular consultations, involving those entities collecting data and fishermen supplying the data. After further discussion it was suggested a joint sub-committee be set up with the HMSPDT to develop and design uniform and appropriate data collection systems. Mr. Pete Dupuy and Mr. Chuck Janisse of the HMSAS volunteered for the sub-committee, and it was suggested that other members of the sub-committee from the HMSPDT would be Dr. Sam Herrick, Dr. Dale Squires and Mr. Steve Croke.

There was a discussion and a request to obtain further information from the proponents of including **long line** gear as a potential gear type under the fishery management plan (FMP). The need for a scientific evaluation of this proposal was urged, and, therefore, this matter was referred again to the PDT for further study.

The HMSAS discussed refining its position on **shark finning**. At the last HMSPDT meeting there had been the suggestion that rather than follow the current state regulations as currently enforced, fins from dead sharks could be removed at sea from carcasses, placed in a plastic bag, and then attached to the carcass. This would permit efficient cold storage of the shark carcasses and guard against fins being collected from discarded shark carcasses. An additional proposal was submitted at this meeting by a HMSAS member which read:

In considering alternatives for enforcement of the previous recommendation that the prohibition of finning of sharks without landing the carcass should be prohibited in any management and conservation alternatives developed, such alternatives should be crafted in such a way as to give fishermen flexibility to comply with this prohibition in ways that are consistent to the particular operation, as well as the flexibility to store, treat, or otherwise cure fins in order to maximize their marketability. To this end, a system that limits the number of shark fins in a fishermen's possession to four times the number of shark carcasses in his possession is recommended as the preferable alternative for enforcement of the prohibition against finning of sharks without retention of the carcass.

A motion was made to refer these proposals to the HMSPDT for analysis, with a vote of seven in favor and one (Domeier) opposed.

Bag limits for highly migratory species (HMS) recreational fishing was discussed resulting in a motion recommending the states set recreational bag limits for all HMS, and specifically that California establish a bag limit of 10 fish for all tuna species. The motion passed with a vote of seven in favor and one (Fricke) opposed. The representative from the State of Washington does not believe bag limits are necessary at this time.

The **management objectives** as set forth in Supplemental HMSPDT Report E.2(2), June 2000, Revised Appendix V were discussed and by a vote of five in favor and three against no new recommendations were made. A companion motion was made that:

The HMSAS recommend to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), directly, and through the Council to the HMSPDT, that all conservation and management measures by the Council of HMS, particularly of tuna and tuna-like species, which are to be conserved and managed under the MHLC, as well as any other regional convention, or treaties, be reasonably consistent with those conventions and treaties.

The motion passed with a vote of five in favor, two (Domeier, Fletcher) opposed, and one abstain (Fricke).

There was a brief presentation by Ms. Kate Wing, Natural Resources Defense Council, of proposed **performance standards and incentives** as they relate to bycatch. A detailed discussion will be scheduled for the HMSPDT's next meeting.

The "**Statement to the Pacific Fishery Management Council by the Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team, September 13, 2000**" was discussed. Since there were no specific requests by the HMSPDT for Council guidance, the HMSAS did not formulate specific comments. Generally, it was emphasized again that management measures needed to be uniform throughout the range of the HMS species which will be subject to the FMP. This includes close coordination between the various Pacific coast states under a federal management system, cooperation between the three management councils in the area (Pacific Council, North Pacific Council, and Western Pacific Council), and consistency with management measures set forth by the IATTC and/or the MHLC.

The HMSPDT 's work schedule was reviewed and the **HMSAS set two meeting dates: Monday, October 30, 2000, in Portland, assuming the Council can schedule any HMS matters for the morning of Tuesday, October 31, 2000. A second meeting is set for February 5 and 6, 2001 in San**

Diego, California. NMFS is requested to provide budgetary support for travel and at least four nights lodging through the first week in February 2001, with additional funding as needed to permit the HMSAS to meet, review, discuss, and comment on the Draft FMP before its submission to the Council.

PFMC
09/13/00

