

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL COMMENTS ON  
FIRST DRAFT OF THE HMS FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and the Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team (HMSPDT) met jointly on March 6-7 to discuss the partial draft of the highly migratory species (HMS) fishery management plan (FMP). While the HMSAS generally agreed that the HMSPDT had done an admirable job preparing this early draft, there were areas that needed substantial revisions. The HMSAS made suggestions to the HMSPDT for revisions and omissions to the FMP, but did not make any recommendations for preferred alternatives due to the very preliminary nature of the text. For the most part, these changes were agreed to by mutual consent, and the HMSPDT agreed to work with the HMSAS members on the revisions.

Recommendations for the Council's consideration proposed and discussed during the meeting included:

- An option to recognize the importance of providing recreational fishing opportunities as one of the management objectives was discussed, but no agreement was reached. There was concern expressed that adding this management objective would disturb the balance between recreational and commercial interests in the objectives.
- A definition was needed for both "user conflict" and "gear conflict".
- The options "status/quo" and "federalize existing regulations" be added to every set of management alternatives.
- Include a matrix summarizing each set of management alternatives and a brief analysis of their relationship to the evaluation factors. This would not replace detailed text describing the full analysis of each alternative, but would serve to organize Chapter 8 and make it easier to read.
- Remove the option to permit the sale of recreationally caught fish.
- The HMSAS voted 7 to 2 against including an option to set quotas/harvest levels for each of the management unit species with the adoption of the FMP.

Other issues discussed:

The HMSAS recommends that the Council notify panel members who have missed two or more meetings per calendar year (without providing an alternate) and determine their intent to serve.

The HMSAS is concerned that there be adequate funding for the development and administration of the plan and asks the Council to encourage NMFS to continue funding.

Finally, because of the broad nature and scope of the suggested changes to the FMP, the HMSAS recommends that the next draft be presented to the Council at the June meeting.

PFMC  
03/08/01