

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON  
DRAFT HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dr. Dale Squires, co-chair of the Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team (HMSPDT), gave the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) a brief overview on the development of the current draft of the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and its supporting appendices. Dr. David Au, HMSPDT member, then presented to the SSC a description of the methods used to develop the productivity estimates for sharks that are presented in Chapter 3 of the FMP. He also addressed specific comments that the HMS Subcommittee of the SSC had made on an earlier draft of the FMP. The SSC discussion of the current draft FMP focused on two issues.

- The exploitation rates presented in Chapter 3 (for example in Table 3-4) are expressed as a fraction of the total population, not as a fraction of the exploitable population as is commonly used. Dr. Au will work with Dr. Andre Punt to revise this.
- A harvest guideline for common thresher sharks is presented in Chapter 3. This guideline was developed using an innovative approach that expresses the guideline as a local maximum sustainable yield (LMSY). The methods used to develop the guideline should be described in the text of Chapter 3. The SSC recommends that a range for the harvest guideline rather than a single value be included in the draft FMP. An LMSY within that range could then be specified and reviewed periodically.

The SSC will use the comprehensive list of research and data needs contained in Section 8.5 when we revise the Council's Research and Data Needs and Economic Data Plan next year. The SSC notes that the development of abundance indices for tunas is an important item that needs to be added to that section of the draft FMP.

Finally, the SSC appreciates the efforts of the HMSPDT in preparing the current draft document. The HMSPDT has been responsive to SSC comments on previous drafts of the FMP. The current draft is substantially improved from previous versions and is ready for public comment.