

HMS FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Date:	January 30, 2002	Hearing Officer:	Mr. Ralph Brown
Location:	Coos Bay, OR Red Lion Hotel South Umpqua Room 1313 N Bayshore Drive Coos Bay, OR 97420	Other Council Members:	
Attendance:	26	NMFS:	
Testifying:	7	HMSPDT:	Ms. Jean McCrae
		Staff:	Mr. Kit Dahl
<u>Organizations Represented:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· United Anglers of Southern California· Ocean Wildlife Campaign			

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the 7 people testifying, generally:

- 2 represented the recreational fishery
- 4 represented the commercial fishery
- 1 represented conservation groups

Commercial Comments

It was noted that foreign vessels should be regulated before U.S. vessels are. Foreign vessels compete with U.S. vessels during good fishing years. U.S. fishermen are over regulated and are being squeezed out by foreign competitors. It was suggested that, because albacore stocks are healthy and albacore trollers do not have bycatch impacts, the troll fishery did not need to be included in the FMP. There was strong opposition to new regulations.

One speaker stated the HMS Advisory Subpanel is not representative of fishermen.

One speaker noted concern about the March 9, 2000 control date. Albacore trolling is an intermittent fishery and some participants may not qualify.

Concern was expressed about the migration of Hawaii-based longliners to the West Coast.

Concern noted about a provision in the FMP that makes halibut and salmon prohibited species in the albacore fishery since many fishermen engage in mixed trips. (This was apparently a misunderstanding on FMP provisions in this regard.)

Recreational Comments

Concern was expressed the FMP does not take into account Oregon coast communities' special characteristics.

There was concern the FMP will prevent catching other species (halibut and salmon) during albacore trips.

One speaker stated that existing state regulations should be recognized in the plan; the plan should contain more information on the recreational fisheries; and the option that specifies a 14" stretched mesh

gillnet regulation should be adopted.

Conservation Group Comments

This speaker supported the prohibited species list in the FMP. He preferred Management Unit Species (MUS) Alternative 4, which includes sixgill shark. He stated his belief the FMP does not go far enough in monitoring and minimizing bycatch and stressed observers should be placed on vessels. He also believes the bycatch reduction plan in the FMP is inadequate.

The plan should also contain “target milestones” for each element.

He does not support the exempted fishery permit alternative, because it does not specify what fisheries will be exempted. Exploratory fishing should not be allowed under this exemption. Relative to exempted fishing, he prefers Alternative 1.

An informal question and answer period was held after the hearing concluded.

Number of Written Statements Submitted at the Hearing = 1

PFMC
02/27/02

Christine Ambrose
P.O. Box 818, Arcata, CA 95518
Phone: 707-822-1343, email: nymph@humboldt1.com

January 31, 2002

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97220-1384

Re: Draft fishery management plan (FMP) for West Coast highly migratory species (HMS) fisheries.

Dear Council:

I support the proposed reductions on pelagic longline fisheries in US Pacific waters. Longlines are among the biggest culprits when it comes to bycatch. I do not support all the waste associated with pelagic longline fisheries, where half the catch is routinely thrown back to sea, unwanted or illegal, and usually dead. It is time this unnecessary waste is stopped.

I encourage the PFMC to adopt the following:

- **US unilateral action.**
Some have argued that the US should not unilaterally try to manage fish that cross international boundaries without a Pacific-wide management regime because the fish we save will just be caught in other nation's waters. However, the US is mandated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to manage fisheries in federal waters. US action could also serve to spearhead the formation of a basin-wide management plan.
- **Quotas for common thresher (390-510 mt) and shortfin mako (200 mt) sharks.**
- **Prohibition on the sale of striped marlin.**
- **Prohibition on the retention of white, basking and megamouth sharks.**

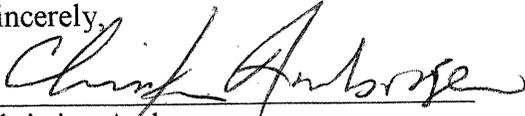
I also support the following:

- **Precautionary quotas.**
Since much is still unknown about the population status of Pacific pelagics and because fishing pressure is steadily increasing following fishery declines in the Atlantic, we encourage the implementation of precautionary quotas, especially for Pacific bluefin tuna and swordfish. These quotas could be set at historic or current catch rates to prevent vast fleet expansion.
- **Bycatch reduction measures.**
Incorporate a more comprehensive bycatch reduction plan as mandated by National Standard #9.
- **Monitoring & observer coverage.**
Encourage mandatory vessel monitoring systems (VMS) for the pelagic longline fishery to ensure they are fishing outside of US waters. The plan needs higher observer coverage to ensure compliance and to validate logbooks for increased confidence in catch data (which are used in stock assessments). The plan currently authorizes the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service to regulate the observer program but does not provide any details. A minimum coverage should be set (~10%).

Please send me an electronic (pdf format on CD) copy of the draft HMS FMP. *(she picked up a CD at the hearing)*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,


Christine Ambrose