

HMS FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

<p>Date: February 4, 2002</p> <p>Location: San Diego, CA Hubbs-Sea World Rsrch Inst. 2595 Ingraham Street San Diego, CA 92109</p> <p>Attendance: 60</p> <p>Testifying: 13</p>	<p>Hearing Officer: Mr. Don Hansen</p> <p>Other Council Members: Mr. LB Boydston</p> <p>NMFS: Mr. Svein Fougner</p> <p>HMSPDT: Dr. David Au Dr. Norm Bartoo Mr. Steve Crooke Ms. Susan Smith Dr. Dale Squires</p> <p>Staff: Mr. Larry Six</p>
<p><u>Organizations Represented:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Southwestern Yacht Club Anglers · Sportfishing Association of California · The Marlin Club of San Diego · San Diego Rod and Reel Club · Ocean Wildlife Campaign · The Billfish Foundation · United Anglers of Southern California 	

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the 13 people testifying, generally:

- 9 represented the recreational fishery
- 3 represented the commercial fishery
- 1 represented conservation groups

Commercial Comments

One vessel owner who fishes for albacore noted the albacore stock is doing well after being impacted in the 1980's by the high seas driftnet fishery. He expressed some concern about the small-mesh gillnet fishery and its potential to impact the market, because product quality is inferior. He asked the Council to consider this issue carefully before expanding this fishery.

A gillnet vessel owner spoke in favor of the small-mesh fishery, and he opposed the 14-inch mesh restriction. He stated that most of the albacore and bluefin taken in this fishery go into a special sushi market (not in the troll market), and product quality is high. He asked the Council to make a decision based on science, not public opinion. He estimated that 40 vessels are using small mesh to target tuna.

Another vessel owner stated there is enough fish for all groups and no need to shut down commercial fisheries when there is a market for these fish, and especially given the lack of data.

Recreational Comments

Representatives of United Anglers of Southern California supported the preferred alternatives and complimented the Council on the excellent process of plan development. They supported the 14-inch mesh size option and a low incidental catch rate.

The representative of the San Diego Rod and Reel Club supported no longlining in the EEZ, but felt the Council should go further in restricting use of longlines and drift gillnets beyond the EEZ, because of the impact on striped marlin. He supported the 14-inch mesh size restriction.

The representative of The Billfish Foundation concurred with the preferred alternatives and thanked the Council for the opportunity for the southern California sport fishing community to become involved in the Council process. The recreational fishery is a legitimate economic activity which supports many jobs.

Other anglers generally expressed support for the FMP and the preferred alternatives.

Conservation Group Comments

The representative of the Ocean Wildlife Campaign stated that the FMP was a good first step. He supported most of the preferred alternatives. He recommended the Council develop its own guidelines for EFPs with an emphasis on bycatch reduction not exploratory fishing. He supports authority to establish observer programs, but suggested the FMP should go further and specify numbers of observers needed across the fleet. He supported the harvest guidelines for thresher and mako sharks, but would prefer that the Council cap catches of all HMS at current levels.

Other Testimony

None.

At the end of formal testimony, there was an informal discussion about the small-mesh gillnet fishery and the lack of data on this fishery.

Number of Written Statements Submitted at the Hearing = 0

PFMC
02/27/02