

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"><li>· United Anglers of Southern California</li><li>· Ocean Wildlife Campaign</li></ul>			

**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

**Capt. Richard J. Oba**  
**Pacific Pioneer Charters**  
**PO Box 1266**  
**Winchester Bay, OR 97467-0813**  
**January 30, 2002**

Pacific Fishery Management Council  
7700 NE Ambassador Pl.  
Portland, OR

RE: Comments on the Highly Migratory Species Fisheries Management Plan

I am the owner/operator of the only HMS charter boat out of Winchester Bay, OR. I chose Winchester Bay to fish for albacore tuna and other HMS species as there were no charter boats to give the people of the South Central Oregon coast a chance to catch these fish. In my first year of operation I ran over a dozen 12 hr. trips for tuna. I averaged over six tuna per passenger and plan to expand my charter service in 2002. My passengers were mostly working class or retirees. As such they can not afford to go fishing lightly. They only go if there are fish to catch. I am concerned about several of the proposals in the FMP that would affect my business. As I am running only a six pack operation, several of the proposals work an undue hardship on my business. More management or added fees would only make it harder to make a living running a six pack operation. I want to provide my customers with the best experience fishing and not overcapitalize in a cattle boat to take dozens of anglers out. I would ask that the PFMC consider the nature of the Oregon coastal communities when they promulgate the FMP. We are small towns that depend on the day and overnight fleet out of our harbors. The one size fits all management plans will result in harming the economies of the coast.

Although I would like to comment on all the proposals, I have selected the ones that have a direct impact on my business.

8.3.4.2 I support the adoption of the HMS FMP with the point of concern mechanism. This provides means by which new information can be incorporated into the FMP. It also allows for action if there is a determination that overfishing is occurring.

8.3.5 I support the biennial management cycle. But I would add that the public review process occur in the Winter. Most of the people involved in the HMS fishery are out to sea during the Summer months and it would be difficult to get input with many participants at work.

8.4.1 I support alternative 2 to ban pelagic longline gear. Pelagic longline gear is currently the subject of legal action. Also under recreational gear, I would make a better definition of hook and line gear. Most recreational anglers call these non-reel lines attached to the boat; jig lines, meat lines or boat lines.

8.4.2 I support the no action alternative. I believe that having a quota for incidental catch merely makes catching fish illegally legal.

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8.43 I support Alternative 2. If we are trying to protect the fish with a EFH definition, then we should include meaningful EFH habitat.

8.4.4 Although I feel the same way about "bycatch" as I do "incidental catch" I strongly support catch and release for all participants in the fishery.

8.4.5 I support this proposal. This allows the PFMC to act to protect endangered species.

8.4.6 At this time I can not support an observer program on my boat. I am running a six pack operation and legally can not carry extra passengers. If I carried an observer, it would cost me a paying passenger and could mean the difference between making a living or losing money.

8.4.7 I support alternative 2 to protect the shark species. To ban participation in other legal fisheries would work an undue hardship on my business. The statement in the FMP does not mention Sebastes as an excluded fishery. Sebastes is also an overcapitalized and overfished fishery. Halibut and salmon should not be the only fisheries targeted for exclusion. Salmon and halibut have their own FMP's and are subject to state and international regulation already. There is no need to single out these two fisheries for inclusion in this FMP.

8.4.8 I support the proposal as written. Better data is needed to determine if the shark population is in trouble.

8.411 I support alternative 1. I believe that the PFMC should have oversight on Exempted Fishing Permits. These are merely a legal way to test illegal gear.

8.5.4 I oppose any form of drift gillnet fishing for HMS species. Although the proposal claims to adopt new closures off Oregon, it leaves the majority of the offshore waters off Oregon open to drift gillnets. The majority of Oregon HMS commercial fishermen are day or overnight boats. To allow drift gillnets off Oregon would impact the coastal fishing communities as most of the drift gillnet boats land their fish other than at the small local ports.

8.5.5 I strongly support the banning of longline gear. Longline gear has had a detrimental effect on oceanic wildlife and its use is currently the subject of litigation.

Thank You,



Capt. Richard Oba  
50 ton USCG licensed master  
Owner/operator, SYDNEY MAE