

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Situation:** The Council is scheduled to take final action on the fishery management plan (FMP) for West Coast highly migratory species (HMS) fisheries. The FMP, with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), was distributed for public review beginning January 5, 2002. From January 28-February 4, seven public hearings were held to provide interested individuals opportunity to comment on the FMP and DEIS; summaries from these hearings are included as attachments (Exhibit G.2, Attachment 2.a-g).

At this meeting, the Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team (HMSPDT) will review the proposed management actions and alternatives. The HMS Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) will provide their comments.

In the draft plan, the Council has specified preferred options in some cases, and not specified preferences in others. At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to select options for final recommendation to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Attachment 1 summarizes the necessary decisions and the Council's preferred options to date.

Public comments on the draft FMP are enclosed (Exhibit G.2.d). As of February 22, 2002, the Council received approximately 1,112 pieces of correspondence (email, fax, mail) related to the draft FMP. 1,074 of these were from mass mail campaigns (983 and 91, respectively). 38 individual letters or emails make up the balance of comments received. Generally, the majority of the comments support adoption of the FMP and the current preferred alternatives. Many comments specifically call for prohibition of the use of pelagic longline gear within the U.S. exclusive economic zone. There are also many comments calling for conservative management. In contrast, several comments question the need for further restrictions on commercial fisheries; including longline gear prohibition, minimum drift gillnet mesh restrictions, and purse seine area closures. One very detailed set of comments was received. This commentator questioned the need for a Federal FMP and several of the management restrictions in the draft FMP.

Previously (September 2000-November 2001), the Council received approximately 5,760 letters specifically in opposition to the use of pelagic longline gear.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Consider final adoption of FMP. Select preferred alternatives and provide guidance to the HMSPDT and HMSAS for finalizing the FMP, where necessary.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Draft Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan, Including Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Regulatory Impact Review (**please bring your copy with you**).
2. Outline of proposed actions and alternatives (Exhibit G.2, Attachment 1).
3. Public hearing summaries (Exhibit G.2, Attachment 2.a-g).
4. Exhibit G.2.d, Public Comment.
5. Exhibit G.2.c, Supplemental HMSPDT Report.
6. Exhibit G.2.c, Supplemental HMSAS Report.

### **Agenda Order:**

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Draft FMP and EIS
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt HMS FMP for Implementation

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