

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT
ON TRANSHIPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) discussed the permit application requesting authorization for a Mexican vessel to accept transfers of live tuna from U.S. purse seiners in the Pacific waters of the exclusive economic zone south of 38° N latitude. The fish will be transferred to a cage which will be towed into Mexican waters, and the fish will be released into an aquaculture facility.

The HMSAS requests that conditions be placed on the permit to ensure reporting of catch in the purse seines and mortality of tuna in the towed cage. The catch should be identified separately from traditional harvests of tuna. There is a concern that this fishery could establish catch history for a future regulatory program which might be detrimental to the interests of other U.S. fishers.

There also is concern about the introduction of disease from the use of infected fish as feed, so there should be a provision to ensure that the source of feed is disease-free, or require the feed comes from the area (southern California) where the tuna were taken.

PFMC
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