

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT FOR LIMITED ENTRY
IN THE HIGH SEAS PELAGIC LONGLINE FISHERY

At this meeting, the Council will consider how to proceed with development of an amendment to the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

At the April 2004 meeting, the Council was updated on HMS Management Team (HMSMT) progress in developing information for a limited entry program for the high seas shallow set longline fishery. The HMSMT has developed a data framework to describe participation in the high seas longline fishery. The database will inform decision making for selecting qualifying window periods and landings. One goal of the limited entry program would be to reduce fishing effort to a level that minimizes protected resource impacts, notably "take" of ESA-listed sea turtles. Based on recommendations from NMFS, the HMSMT, and HMS Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS), the Council broadened the scope of the FMP amendment to include limited entry considerations and management alternatives that could be similar to those implemented for the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council-managed longline fishery. The Council directed the HMSMT to develop, in collaboration with the NMFS-Southwest Region, estimates of thresholds of species-specific sea turtle takes under the HMS FMP.

The Council also directed the HMSMT to add information from the FMP-managed drift gillnet (DGN) fishery to the fleet profile database; specifically, information on current DGN permit holders and active fishery participants, and landings history for the period 1997 through the present. This additional information could provide a means to consider re-structuring the DGN fishery in concert with the high seas longline fishery. The rationale for this request is that both of these fisheries might need to be re-structured if the shallow set longline fishery were to be re-opened and sea turtle takes are to be kept at levels that will not result in jeopardy to any ESA-listed species.

The HMSMT met June 1-2, 2004 to begin to carry out Council direction from the April Council meeting. Members of the HMSMT have also been coordinating with NMFS-Protected Resources staff to develop projected sea turtle takes under different scenarios for the longline and DGN fisheries. The HMSAS is scheduled to review information provided by the HMSMT, including projected sea turtle takes and initial management considerations. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) is also scheduled to review the projected sea turtle interaction data.

Based on the advice of NMFS and recommendations of the SSC, HMSMT, and HMSAS, the Council should consider how to proceed with developing an amendment to the HMS FMP.

Council Task:

Recommendations for Proceeding with Implementation of Limited Entry in the High Seas Pelagic Longline Fishery.

Reference Materials:

1. Agendum H.2.d, Public Comment
2. Agendum H.2.c, Supplemental SSC Report
3. Agendum H.2.c, Supplemental HMSMT Report
4. Agendum H.2.c, Supplemental HMSAS Report

Agenda Order:

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. NMFS Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. Council Recommendations for Proceeding with Implementation of Limited Entry in the High Seas Pelagic Longline Fishery

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