

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM (HMSMT) REPORT ON MANAGEMENT REGIME FOR HIGH SEAS LONGLINE FISHERY

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) had a brief discussion about the high seas longline fishery at our May 12-13, meeting. To provide some background, in June 2003, the Council had provided guidance to the HMSMT to begin the plan amendment process to develop a limited entry program for the high seas pelagic longline fishery. The HMSMT last met in June 2004 and had developed some alternatives for Council consideration (primarily short-term management measure alternatives to provide shallow set longline fishing opportunity on the high seas); the proposed schedule at that time was:

Before Sept	Develop and analyze alternatives
Sept 2004	HMSAS meeting to review and comment on alternatives
Nov 2004	Council consider approving alternatives (for high seas shallow set longline) for public review
Mar 2005	Final Council action (for high seas shallow set longline) and setting of control date for high seas longline fishery limited entry
Oct 2005	Effective date of final rule (for high seas shallow set longline)
Nov 2005	HMSMT begin development of long-term plan amendment for limited entry program (Target: April 2007)

As you know, this effort, as well as other HMS management initiatives, was placed on hold due to lack of funding. The HMSMT recommends that this effort continue under a slightly more aggressive schedule:

Nov 2005	Council consider approving alternatives for public review (for high seas shallow set longline) and set control date (for limited entry program)
Mar 2006	Final Council action (for high seas shallow set longline)
Sept 2006	Effective date of final rule (for high seas shallow set longline)
Oct 2006	HMSMT begin development of long-term plan amendment for limited entry program (Target: Apr 2008)

The HMSMT would develop the alternatives for the pelagic longline fishery in conjunction with consideration of estimated protected species interactions on a cumulative basis for all HMS fisheries. This would include the drift gillnet fishery, any exempted fisheries, and the pelagic longline fishery. Regulatory coordination with Hawaii regarding the shallow set longline fishery would also occur.

HMSMT Recommendations:

1. Direct HMSMT to continue effort to develop management measures for the high seas longline fishery.
2. Approve proposed timeline and schedule.