

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
MANAGEMENT REGIME FOR HIGH SEAS LONGLINE FISHERY

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) recommends:

- The Council should pursue an avenue of reopening the West Coast longline fishery outside of 200 nm and east of 140° longitude, with new regulations to address protected species.
- Because the biological opinion was based on the longline fishery east of 140° west because of new gear and bait techniques to avoid turtles, the HMSAS requests the Council ask that a new turtle Biological Opinion be conducted, and a directed swordfish high seas longline fishery between 140° west and the West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) be opened based on the results of the new Biological Opinion. Also, the Council should let vessels with gear and a history of landing swordfish in past fisheries be allowed to participate. The proposed fishery should be based on a range of 1,500, 2,250, and 3,000 sets.
- The Council should pursue emergency action to reopen the West Coast fishery to provide economic relief

A minority of the HMSAS opposes expansion of the longline fishery on the grounds that:

- The exempted fishing permit (EFP) does not address reductions of finfish bycatch, which is the Council's highest priority for EFPs in the fishery management plan.
- Bigeye are overfished, the U.S. is under a 150 mt cap, and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) science staff recommends a significant (40%) reduction in eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) fishing mortality
- Yellowfin tuna are on the verge of an overfished condition, with an IATTC assessment working group recommending purse seine closures of up to six months per year
- The latest assessment results for albacore strongly indicate overfishing, and the U.S. delegation will recommend a cap on all EPO albacore effort.

Therefore, there is no need to promote new and likely unsustainable fisheries.

PFMC  
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