

NMFS REPORT

National Marine Fisheries Service Southwest Region (NMFS SWR) has undertaken various activities related to the implementation of the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS). As reported at the March 2005 Council meeting, implementing regulations, including reporting and recordkeeping requirements, but excepting vessel marking requirements, came into effect on or before April 11, 2005. Vessel marking requirements will be implemented by mid-2005. From April 19 to 29, 2005, NMFS SWR staff, with assistance from Mark Cedergreen, Michele Culver of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Jean McCrae of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, organized a series of informational meetings at West Coast ports to inform fishermen about these requirements. Attachment 1 is a summary report of these meetings.

During the development of the HMS FMP, the Plan Development Team requested NMFS SWR develop an implementation plan for the HMS observer program. NMFS SWR hired a private contractor to develop the plan. Attachment 2 is their final report. Attachment 3 provides a brief report on Observer Program activities in FY2005.

One of the new requirements under the HMS FMP is for commercial HMS vessels to maintain logbooks. All fishery sectors, except for recreational charter vessels in Washington and Oregon, already maintain logbooks which NMFS SWR has determined meet this requirement. NMFS SWR requested assistance from the HMSAS and HMSMT in developing a logbook form for these fisheries. Attachment 4 is a draft version of the form developed with assistance from HMSMT members.

Installation of a vessel monitoring system (VMS) for HMS fisheries is another monitoring activity identified in the HMS FMP. Resolution C-04-06 adopted at the June 14-18, 2004, meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) states in part "Each Party with tuna-fishing vessels 24 meters or more in length operating in the eastern Pacific Ocean and harvesting species for which the Commission has established conservation and management measures shall, by January 1, 2005, or as soon as possible thereafter, establish a satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS); except that a Party that already has such a program in effect shall be deemed to have satisfied this requirement." Attachment 5 contains the full text of the resolution.

Attachment 6 summarizes the May 12, 2005, meeting of the General Advisory Committee (GAC) to the U.S. Section of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) hosted by NMFS SWR in conjunction with the U.S. Department of State. Attachment 7 summarizes the April 26-27, 2005, U.S.-Canada annual albacore treaty meeting where participants discussed the conduct of the 2004 season and future management of the resource.

NMFS has been hearing from participants of the drift gillnet (DGN) fishery requesting a reevaluation of the time/area closure, extending from approximately Point Sur, California, to the mid-Oregon coast from August 15 to November 15. In addition, the Council received two letters from the Federation of Independent Seafood Harvesters (FISH) (see Agenda Item E.1.d, Public Comment) requesting the HMSMT to reevaluate this closure. The second of these letters, dated May 11, contains specific proposals for eliminating or modifying the extent of this closure. The

HMSMT discussed these proposals at their May 12-13 meeting and is prepared to provide a preliminary report to the Council on this matter (see Agenda Item E.1.c, HMSMT Report). (Agenda Item E.3.a, Attachment 1 is the meeting summary from the May 12-13 HMSMT meeting, which included discussion of this topic.)

Under Agenda Item E.1.b the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center will provide an oral report on recent HMS stock assessments conducted by scientists with the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean and the IATTC.

Council Task: Council Discussion

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 1: Report of the HMS FMP Pacific Northwest Informational Meetings.
2. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 2: Recommendations for U.S. West Coast Highly Migratory Species Observer Programs with Options for Levels of Significance, Final Report.
3. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 3: NMFS SWR Observer Program Report, FY2005.
4. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 4: Washington - Oregon Charter Boat Logbook For HMS Fisheries (Albacore Tuna).
5. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 5: Resolution C-04-06, Resolution on the Establishment of a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).
6. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 6: Report of the Fourth General Advisory Committee (GAC) to the U.S. Section of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).
7. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 7: Summary of April 26-27, 2005, U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty Meeting.
8. Agenda Item E.1.c, HMSMT Report.
9. Agenda Item E.1.d, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Regulatory Activities
- b. Science Center Activities
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. Council Discussion

Mark Helvey
Gary Sakagawa

PFMC
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