

Report of the HMS FMP Pacific Northwest Informational Meetings Craig Heberer

Summary

A series of U.S. West Coast Highly Migratory Species FMP meetings were held in key Pacific Northwest ports during the week of April 25-29, 2005. The meetings were conducted by Craig Heberer with assistance from Carolyn Parker (Frank Orth Observer Contract Manager) and included a power point presentation on HMS FMP implementation measures with explanation of key domestic and international aspects.

Evening meetings were held in Westport, WA; Astoria, Newport, and Charleston, OR; and Eureka, CA. Attendance averaged about 25 constituents per meeting. Attendees expressed frustration with NMFS and Council management due in part to the very restrictive time/area constraints instituted for the 2005 ocean salmon season. They believe the cutbacks in fishing opportunity have been forced upon them as a result of government mis-management of the Klamath River system. Once the venting on the ocean salmon seasons concluded the discussions relating to HMS FMP went well and the mood was generally cooperative.

The meetings were successful in the sense that fishermen put a face to the FMP and a baseline relationship was established. Side bar conversations were held after the meetings adjourned and additional questions were clarified. We recommend that these meetings be conducted on a bi-annual or annual basis if possible.

Several attendees complained that the meetings were not well advertised and suggested that we post future meeting notices on the local public television channels a week or so in advance¹.

Thanks to Michele Culver, Jean McCrae, Mark Cedergreen, Dave Cleary, and Kit Dahl for their assistance in securing site venues and advertising the meetings to fishermen in Washington and Oregon.

Topics of discussion included:

1. Status of HMS permits (a prominent theme at all meetings).
2. Why are permits being assigned to owner versus to the vessel. Their concerns centered on the ability to transfer permit at death or vessel sale and status of new owner eligibility.
3. How to interpret control date in the FMP set at March 9, 2000.
4. U.S. fishermen always bearing the brunt of uni-lateral management controls and regulations while foreign fleets operate with little or no controls (e.g., sea turtle protections on U.S. longliners while DWFN longliners keep fishing and hammering).

¹ Future meeting notices can be handled with a mailer thanks to the capture of mailing addresses via the HMS permit database.

5. Why do we need federal management when things are working just fine as they are.
6. Federal government has mis-managed every single fishery under its authority.
7. If North Pacific albacore stocks approaching fully exploited status, and quotas/allocations on the horizon, we want the Canadians out of our waters.
8. Don't trust the data from foreign countries/distant water fleets being used for stock assessments... who is monitoring the quality of reporting.
9. Our boats too small for observers.
10. Give the boats a small stipend to cover observer costs, for example, \$300 per trip.
11. For Recreational Charter fishermen on smaller boats, carrying observer would be a burden as trips are reserved well in advance of the season. A paying customer would have to be dropped to fit an observer. Space an issue
12. Vessel marking requirement unnecessary for small recreational charter vessels. If WDFW and USCG did not require 10" official numbers to be placed on hull of vessels, why is PFMC/NMFS requiring it.
13. Stock assessments use bad data (e.g., worthless logbook data). They are concerned that lack of knowledge on environmental and oceanographic links make assessments and management that stems from it very shaky.
14. Albacore fishery even more important this year due to down year for salmon opportunity.

Report of the HMS FMP Central and Southern California Informational Meetings Don Petersen

Summary

A series of U.S. West Coast Highly Migratory Species FMP meetings were held in key Central and Southern California during the weeks of April 18-22 and 25-29, 2005. The meetings were conducted by Cathy Campbell, Tina Fahy, Lyle Enriques, and Don Petersen with the assistance of Carolyn Parker and Scott Casey (Contracted Observer Providers). These meetings also included the mandated Drift Gillnet Skipper Workshops and included a power point presentation on Drift Gillnet Take Reduction Plan measures with an explanation of key sea turtle domestic and international aspects.

Port meetings were held in Santa Barbara, Morro Bay, Monterey, San Diego and Long Beach. Attendance was between 5-25 constituents per meeting. The meetings were successful in the sense that fishermen put a face to the NMFS and Observer Provider staff. NMFS staff recommends that these meetings be conducted on an annual basis.

Several non-drift gillnet attendees complained that the meetings were not well advertised and suggested better posting of future meeting notices.

Thanks to Harbormasters, Sea Grant Marine Advisors, Tom Roth, Cathy Campbell, Jim Milbury, Sarah Dunsford, and the Pacific Fishery Management Council for their assistance in securing site venues and advertising the meetings to fishermen in Central and Southern California.

Topics of discussion included:

1. Status of HMS permits (a prominent theme at all meetings).
2. Status of MMAP permits.
3. U.S. fishermen always bearing the brunt of uni-lateral management controls and regulations while foreign fleets operate with little or no controls (e.g., sea turtle protections on U.S. longliners and drift gillnetters while international fleets keep fishing).
4. Don't trust the data from foreign countries/distant water fleets being used for stock assessments... who is monitoring the quality of reporting.
5. Re-opening or modifying of leatherback sea turtle closure
6. DGN pinger attachment issues.
7. DGN regarding high price of pingers and batteries.
8. Why are unobservable vessels considered too small or unsafe for observers. Who decides.
9. Observer sampling may disrupt fishing operations
10. Marine mammal and sea turtle stock assessments use bad data (e.g., worthless logbook data). How are marine mammal surveys conducted? They are concerned that lack of knowledge on environmental and oceanographic links make assessments and management that stems from it very shaky.
11. If North Pacific albacore stocks approaching fully exploited status, and quotas/allocations on the horizon, we want the Canadians out of our waters.
12. Albacore fishery even more important this year due to down year for salmon opportunity.
13. Why do we need federal management when things are working just fine as they are.
14. Federal government has mis-managed every single fishery under its authority.