

MOTION ON HIGH SEAS LIMITED ENTRY LONGLINE FISHERY

The staff white paper (Agenda Item F.2.a, Attachment 1) describes the following alternatives:

1. Status quo – Shallow-set longline fishing seaward of 200 nm and east of 150 deg W longitude allowed by Hawaii-permitted vessels only; landings can occur on the West Coast by Hawaii-permitted vessels.
2. Use management measures, such as take caps or set certificates, rather than license limitation, to limit shallow-set longline effort seaward of 200 nm.
3. Implement a West Coast limited entry program for shallow-set longline fishery seaward of 200 nm subject to regulations, which would include sea turtle protection measures.
4. Implement a West Coast limited entry program for shallow-set longline fishery seaward of 200 nm (same as Alternative 3) and require a drift gillnet permit to participate.
5. Pursue joint management efforts with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Motion:

1. Adopt a preliminary purpose and need statement as follows:

The proposed action is to implement a limited West Coast-based shallow-set longline fishery to target swordfish on the high seas, which would be subject to conservation and management measures to protect, among other things, listed sea turtles, seabirds, and marine mammals.

2. Adopt Alternatives 1, 3, 4, and 5 described in the staff white paper as a preliminary range of alternatives for further exploration. (Note: Alternative 4 could be a sub-option of Alternative 3—e.g., Alternative 3a.)

Rationale – There are problems with Alternative 2 relative to creating a derby-style fishery and a level of fishing effort that could potentially result in a jeopardy finding under the Endangered Species Act. With regard to Alternative 3, while the majority of drift gillnet permitted vessels are not big enough or configured properly to fish long-distance, the feasibility of Alternative 3 should be further explored. While there may be higher costs associated with Alternative 5, the cooperative nature of this approach also warrants further consideration.

3. The HMSMT and HMSAS could develop sub-options for Alternative 3 with different conservation and management measures.
4. Suggested Process and Timeline:
 - a. March 2008 – Council consider draft range of alternatives for public review and preliminary guidance on qualifying criteria for analysis
 - b. July-Aug 2008 – HMS Management Committee meet with HMSMT and HMSAS to provide further guidance (if needed)
 - c. November 2008 – Council adopt a preferred alternative