

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON HIGH SEAS SHALLOW-SET LONGLINE (SSLL) AMENDMENT

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) would like to emphasize the following goals for the High Seas SSLL amendment:

- Provide opportunity for historic and/or current west coast based fishermen who participated in fisheries targeting swordfish and landed in west coast ports.
- Not to increase fleet size operating from the west coast that is targeting swordfish.
- There is a need to proceed with this amendment or the Hawaii-based fleet will likely utilize Endangered Species Act (ESA) allowed turtle impacts.
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The HMSAS has been advised by the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) that approximately one million hooks can potentially qualify which the HMSAS estimates would support between 12 and 25 active permits. However, the western boundary is yet to be determined and the availability of observers will be factors in determining actual participation. The HMSAS suggests that a point ranking system with the following categories be included in the range of alternatives, which will identify a pool of eligible fishermen to receive permits to participate in fishery. Following is a list of categories that would be assigned points leading to the permit ranking:

- Owning a current drift gillnet (DGN) permit and having current landings of swordfish by longline.
- Owning a current DGN permit.
- Owning a current DGN permit and have swordfish landings between 2001 and 2007.
- Length of ownership of a DGN permit.
- Medical reasons for not meeting requirements.
- A review board would rate unforeseen circumstances.

The HMSAS suggests that the ranking remains regardless if licensee refuses opportunity, that one fishing operation is restricted to one longline permit, that one vessel cannot own both a westcoast and hawaiian longline permit simultaneously, that a vessel cannot have both DGN and longline gear on the vessel at the same time, and that the framework amendment is written so the participants, number of hooks, number of sets, etc. can be expanded or contracted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) without a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendment.

Some members of the HMSAS, have recommended that a Pacific-wide conservation and management strategy or joint pelagic fisheries management plan with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (WPFMC) is necessary to establish a high seas SSLL fishery off the U.S. west coast.

However, progress has not been achieved in developing a joint conservation and management strategy between the councils and the WPFMC is proceeding with a unilateral swordfish

amendment to their Pelagic FMP to increase longlining effort in the Western and Eastern Pacific Ocean.

The historic west coast high seas shallow set longline fishery was terminated upon the implementation of the Council's HMS FMP out of concerns for turtle takes.

The HMAS recommends that the Council ask the Secretary to not approve the WPFMC Pelagics FMP amendment until there is an opportunity to jointly review the proposed Council SSL amendment and evaluate the cumulative impact of proposed actions on sea turtles and other protected species as well as vulnerable non-target fish species.

Furthermore, a minority of the HMSAS (Bob Osborn, United Anglers of Southern California, and Meghan Jeans, Ocean Conservancy) recommend that the Council not take unilateral action to establish a high seas SSL fishery but instead should pursue other alternatives, including but not limited to collaboration with the WPFMC, to ensure that a west coast longline fishery does not add to the take of turtles.

PFMC
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