

CHANGES TO ROUTINE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 2009-2010 SEASONS

Section 8.3.2 in the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS) describes the biennial management cycle. A biennial cycle is described with decision making occurring at the June, September, and November Council meetings to establish or adjust harvest specifications for a 2-year period beginning on April 1 of the following year—the start of the next fishing year. This agenda item commences the second biennial management cycle since FMP implementation, with any regulations proposed by the Council becoming effective on or after April 1, 2009. Such regulations continue in effect for at least 2 years unless subsequently modified through the Council process.

At this meeting, the Council will review the regulatory changes proposed by the HMS Management Team (HMSMT) and determine which changes should be considered further. The Council also has the option of identifying other, additional management measures to be implemented during the 2009–10 biennium. According to the FMP, the Council then directs the HMSMT to prepare a draft regulatory analysis for the measures identified by the Council. This analysis will support Council decision making at the September meeting—when the Council adopts proposed actions for public review—and the November meeting—when the Council takes final action.

One issue has been preliminarily identified where new regulations may be appropriate. A recreational fishery targeting thresher sharks has developed over the past few years in the Southern California Bight. Although limited data are available on resulting thresher shark fishing mortality, it is thought to be substantial and perhaps comparable to catch in commercial fisheries. Furthermore, the Southern California Bight is an important pupping ground for thresher sharks. Like many sharks, threshers are viviparous and have low fecundity. Therefore, catches of pregnant females has a greater effect on stock productivity. The drift gillnet fishery has been prohibited from fishing in this area to protect the stock. At the time this regulation was implemented the recreational fishery was of modest size but has since expanded substantially.

The HMSMT will submit a supplemental report providing a more detailed description of the issue and the need for new recreational management measures to limit thresher shark catches.

Council Task:

Council discussion and guidance on initial selection of preliminary proposals for further consideration.

Reference Materials:

None.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kit Dahl
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. Council Discussion and Guidance on Initial Selection of Preliminary Proposals for further Consideration

PFMC
05/27/08