



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southwest Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

JUN 29 2011

Mr. Mark Cedergreen, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place
Portland, Oregon 97220

Dear Mr. Cedergreen:

On June 12, I approved Amendment 2 to the Fishery Management Plan for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP). The Notice of Availability for Amendment 2 was published in the Federal Register on March 14, 2011 (76FR13592). We received no public comments before the deadline.

As you know, Amendment 2 revises the HMS FMP to ensure that it is consistent with guidelines to implement National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. NMFS notes that the Amendment is unclear as to the basis for classifying bigeye thresher and pelagic thresher shark, which have been in the Management Unit, to Ecosystem Component Species, which means the species will be *monitored* but not *managed* under annual catch limits and accountability measures. We have nevertheless approved the Amendment in light of the fact that even as part of the Management Unit these two species would in any case have fallen under the "international exception" to the annual catch limits and accountability requirements(16 U.S.C. 1853 note), as are all the other management unit species of the HMS FMP.

The proposed rule to implement Amendment 2 was published in the Federal Register on April 29, 2011 (RIN 0648-BA35, 76FR23962). The final rule to implement Amendment 2 is under development and will be published in the Federal Register in the near future.

NMFS appreciates the Council's ongoing efforts to meet the objectives of National Standard 1 in order to more effectively prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks, or stocks that may become overfished.

Sincerely,

Rodney R. McInnis
Regional Administrator

