



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384  
Phone 503-820-2280 | Toll free 866-806-7204 | Fax 503-820-2299 | [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)  
Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 18, 2015

TO: Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel, Highly Migratory Species Management Team, and Interested Persons

FROM: Dr. Kit Dahl, Staff Officer for Highly Migratory Species

SUBJECT: March Council Meeting

The Council meeting session begins March 8, 2015, at the Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, Washington. The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will meet Sunday to Wednesday, March 8-11. The HMSAS will be in the Discovery C Room and the HMSMT will be in the Discovery F Room. The meetings begin at 8:00 a.m. each day. Four HMS topics are on the Council agenda. There are also several other topics not directly related to HMS that the HMSAS and HMSMT may wish to comment on. Summaries of all these topics follow.

#### H.1 National Marine Fisheries Service Report

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Regional (WCR) Office will provide an update on domestic regulatory activities under this item. This includes action to address an error in Federal HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) regulations that has been interpreted to prohibit the retention of salmon and halibut on the same trip where albacore are retained. The Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers will report on the 2014 independent program review of fish stock assessments. Bear in mind that this is only an informational briefing and no Council action is scheduled.

#### H.2 Recommendations for International Management Activities Including US-Canada Albacore Treaty Area Fishery Update

Council Chair, Dorothy Lowman, will report on the Eleventh Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC11), which occurred December 1-5, 2014. NMFS WCR will report on issues that may come up at the 87th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting in Guayaquil, Ecuador, scheduled for June July 6-10 2015. Preliminary estimates for landings and revenue from the 2014 US west coast albacore surface hook-and-line fishery are provided in Attachment 2.

### H.3 Final Exempted Fishing Permit Approval

In September 2014 Council staff disseminated an updated solicitation for exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications to test alternative gears and methods for the west coast swordfish fishery. Five proposals were received by the February 9, 2015 deadline. At this meeting the Council is scheduled to make recommendations to NMFS about issuing EFPs in 2015. According to Council Operating Procedure 20, the HMSMT, HMSAS, and SSC should provide advice to the Council to support its recommendations.

### I.4 Drift Gillnet Management and Monitoring Plan Including Final Action on Hard Caps

In September and November 2014 the Council adopted ranges of alternatives for management of the California large mesh drift gillnet (DGN) fishery, and identified its preliminary preferred alternatives. In November the Council also directed Council staff and the HMSMT to draft a purpose and need statement for a Drift Gillnet Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan. The Council also directed staff and advisory bodies to complete a fishery monitoring plan for the June 2015 meeting. You may want to discuss how to fold this task into the overall management and monitoring plan. The HMSMT Report in the briefing materials includes a proposed purpose and need statement, a description of the alternatives, and preliminary analysis. The Council is scheduled to take final action by selecting preferred alternatives at this meeting.

I have added a number of other, non-HMS topics to your meeting agendas. You are encouraged to provide reports on these issues, but these should be lower priority compared to the HMS items summarized above. These include two Fishery Ecosystem Plan issues and the NMFS Strategic Plan Update (Agenda Item I.2).

At its April meeting, the Council is scheduled to take up the vessel movement monitoring issue. This is intended to address requirements to detect illegal activities in restricted areas. The drift gillnet fishery is subject to the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area and vessels are required to carry vessel monitoring system units. Thus that fishery would be subject to this action. Since the HMS committees will not be meeting in April, this will be an opportunity to draft reports on the issue.

I have also included the following Informational Reports:

- NMFS Policy Directive for Integration of Endangered Species Act Section 7 with Magnuson-Stevens Act Processes (#1)
- Proposed Changes to the National Standard Guidelines (#2)
- National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy 2015 (#5)

Paper copies of referenced briefing materials are enclosed. In addition, you may also obtain electronic copies of all the meeting materials on our website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/briefing-books/>. We also post supplemental briefing materials on our website as they become available after distribution of the advanced briefing book.

Fun fact: Vancouver, Washington was incorporated as a city 29 years before its larger namesake to the north, Vancouver, British Columbia, and is the oldest city in Washington State.

KRD:rdd

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.4: Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Item E.2: Review of Fishery Ecosystem Plan Initiatives
3. Agenda Item E.3: Unmanaged Forage Fish Protection Final Action
4. Agenda Item H.1: National Marine Fisheries Service Report
5. Agenda Item H.2: Recommendations for International Management Activities Including US-Canada Albacore Treaty Area Fishery Update
6. Agenda Item H.3: Final Exempted Fishing Permit Approval
7. Agenda Item H.4: Drift Gillnet Management and Monitoring Plan Including Final Action on Hard Caps
8. Agenda Item I.2: National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region Strategic Plan Update
9. Agenda Item I.5 Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning
10. Informational Reports 1, 2, 5
11. HMSAS and HMSMT Meeting Agendas
12. Hotel-related Information
13. Council Roster