

## SWORDFISH MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN HARDCAPS

In June 2014, the Council enumerated a set of goals and objectives for managing Pacific Coast swordfish fisheries and subsequently committed to elaborating them in a comprehensive Swordfish Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan. Concern for the swordfish fishery as whole emerged from discussions about reducing protected species bycatch in the California large mesh drift gillnet (DGN) fishery, the largest West Coast-based swordfish fishery. To reduce bycatch, in September 2014 the Council adopted proposed action and alternatives for caps on protected species bycatch, performance measures, and enhanced fishery monitoring. At the November 2014, March 2015, and June 2015 meetings, the Council further refined the range of alternatives for protected species hard caps and identified preliminary preferred alternatives.

In June 2015, the Council requested a stand-alone Monitoring and Management Plan to concisely describe how the Council is addressing its goals and objectives. Attachment 1 is a draft of the Plan for Council review.

A letter from the Marine Mammal Commission Executive Director to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries that includes comments on the Council's hard cap proposal is attached as Agenda Item G.2.a, Marine Mammal Commission Report.

The Council is scheduled to take final action, by choosing final preferred alternatives, for DGN hard caps, performance objectives, and fishery monitoring enhancements. Agenda Item G.2.a, NMFS Report 1 is a draft environmental assessment evaluating the environmental impacts of the proposed action. NMFS Report 1 also contains a separate analysis of performance metrics options. NMFS concluded that the performance metrics would not be analyzed under NEPA because there is no federal action involved.

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) sponsored the U.S. West Coast Swordfish Meeting, held May 11-12, 2015, in La Jolla, California. The meeting was facilitated by Scott McCreary and Megan Vinett from CONCUR, an environmental dispute resolution firm. CONCUR staff also prepared a Key Outcomes Memorandum on behalf of NMFS, which will be distributed as Agenda Item G.2.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2.

### **Council Action:**

**Consider Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan, and Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives for Hardcaps.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 1: Pacific Coast Swordfish Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan.
2. Agenda Item G.2.a, Marine Mammal Commission Report: Letter from Dr. Rebecca Lent, Executive Director, to Ms. Eileen Sobeck, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
3. Agenda Item G.2.a, NMFS Report 1: Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) of Drift Gillnet Hard Caps and Monitoring Alternatives and Preliminary Analysis of Options for Council and Bycatch Performance Metrics for the U.S. West Coast Large-Mesh Drift Gillnet Fishery.

4. Agenda Item G.2.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2: U.S. West Coast Swordfish Meeting Key Outcomes Memorandum
5. Agenda Item G.2.b, Public Comment

Agenda Order:

- G.1      Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan Hardcaps Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Consider Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan, and Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives for Hardcaps

PFMC  
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