

DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR AMENDMENT SCOPING

The Pflegler Institute of Environmental Research (PIER) has been conducting research and development on deep-set buoy gear since 2010 with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and other partners. Gear testing began in 2011 and was subsequently expanded to include cooperative fishers. In 2015 the Council recommended issuance of three exempted fishing permits (EFPs), including one based on an application from PIER, to allow gear use to move into a more commercial setting where catch is retained and sold. Fishing under the PIER EFP began in September 2015.

At the same time, the Council recognized the promise of this gear to be commercially viable while avoiding sensitive bycatch species like sea turtles and marine mammals. This finding is captured in the initial draft version of the Council's Pacific Coast Swordfish Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan ([Agenda Item G.2, Attachment 1](#), September 2015), although it is important to note this draft plan was not acted upon by the Council due to time constraints at that particular meeting. The Council thus decided that while exempted fishing is ongoing it would begin the process to authorize this gear type under the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The intent is to allow a smooth transition from exempted fishing to an authorized fishery.

To authorize a new fishery, the FMP for West Coast Fisheries for HMS would need to be amended, and implementing regulations then published. This would include a gear definition, management measures, and a permitting regime.

The attached HMS Management Team Report (Agenda Item F.3.a, HMSMT Report) describes a potential gear definition and possible management measures, and discusses options for a permitting regime. NMFS has also submitted a report (Agenda Item F.3.a, NMFS Report) to support scoping of this topic. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will submit a supplemental report.

Council Action:

Consider Issues to be Addressed in a Fishery Management Plan Amendment to Authorize Deep-Set Buoy Gear in West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fisheries.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.3.a, NMFS Report.
2. Agenda Item F.3.a, HMSMT Report.
3. Agenda Item F.3.a, Supplemental CDFW Report.
4. Agenda Item F.3.b, Public Comment: The Sportsfishing Conservancy.

Agenda Order:

- F.3 Deep-Set Buoy Gear Amendment Scoping Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Consider Issues to be Addressed in a Fishery Management Plan Amendment to Authorize Deep-Set Buoy Gear in West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fisheries

PFMC
02/11/16