

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR SCOPING

Agenda Item [F.3.a HMSMT Report](#) outlines scoping information on potential authorization of deep-set buoy gear (DSBG). After further discussion at this meeting, the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) provides additional comments for the Council's consideration.

The HMSMT notes that the approved DSBG exempted fishing permits (EFPs) are not yet complete, and have categorized those scoping topics that may be better evaluated with additional EFP results. These include spatial and temporal ranges, bycatch and protected species interactions in other regions, and economic considerations. Other topics, including permits, training, gear configurations, concurrent gear use, monitoring or observer coverage, and logbooks, will likely not be better informed by additional research and can be evaluated with currently available information.

Another factor potentially complicating authorization of DSBG is a new state senate bill, SB1114. While language for the bill is not yet available, it concerns the authorization of DSBG and the current drift gillnet fishery. If passed, decisions made by the Council at this point may need to be revisited or altered in order to accommodate potential increased complexity in the process once the details become available.

In recognition that the Council wishes to proceed expeditiously and given the above considerations, the HMSMT offers the following possible approaches for moving forward on DSBG scoping:

- 1) Proceed with development of the range of alternatives (ROA) on all scoping topics without waiting for additional EFP results.
- 2) Proceed with development of the ROA on only those scoping topics that will likely not be further informed by additional EFP results. The HMSMT could develop a range of alternatives for remaining topics as additional data become available. This would allow for authorization of the gear to proceed through a flexible Council schedule, while ensuring that the process continues to move forward with the most relevant and thorough information.
- 3) Proceed with development of the ROA on all scoping topics, based on phased implementation of a potential fishery. For example, no information is available about DSBG fishing in areas outside the Southern California Bight or throughout the entire year. Alternatives could be developed for a fishery that operates in a limited area or time period. Additional phases could address fishery implementation in expanded areas and times. A similar approach could be applied to fleet size.