

June 23, 2016

## Agenda Item D.5: Deep-Set Buoy Gear

Dear Chair Lowman and members of the Council:

We are working together to find areas of common ground and agreement on what a deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) fishery should look like. We recommend that the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Team include the following alternatives and considerations for analysis with the intention that they will help the Team establish a viable DSBG fishery. DSBG has the support of scientists, researchers, fishermen, and NGOs as it shows promise to be an effective method for catching swordfish with minimal bycatch.

### *Phased-in Approach to Permit Issuance*

- Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) participants have first priority
- Active drift gillnet and harpoon fleets have second priority
- Limit the initial issuance of 25-50 permits in order to prevent overcrowding in the southern California bight, allow the market for buoy-caught swordfish to expand, and carefully evaluate potential impacts of the new fishery
- Goal is to issue the permits to those who are going to use them
- Balances the need for adequate amount of data collection and controlled implementation
- Allow additional capacity and access after an impact assessment during the biennial specs process determines that any negative impacts are minimal
- Consider permit trade-ins
- Allow for gear expansion for profitability

### *Authorized Areas*

- DSBG allowed in federal waters (beyond 3 nm) including the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area (PLCA) and loggerhead conservation areas

### *Monitoring*

- DSBG is selective by design and actively tended by fishermen - monitoring levels should be set at a level consistent with the nature of the gear and the need to produce statistically valid data
- Consider a NMFS pilot program to assess the appropriate level of observer coverage needed for statistically valid data collection

### *Permit issuance*

- DSBG as a federally authorized and permitted HMS fishery
- DSBG permits issued to the vessel, not the captain

### *Definitions*

- Mirroring EFP definitions and gear specifications

- Active tending definition – flexible enough to allow for the simultaneous use of harpoon
- Target species – all marketable HMS species, primarily swordfish
- Prohibited Species – all those currently prohibited under the HMS FMP

We look forward to continued conversations as the authorization process moves forward.

Sincerely,



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