

**HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT
ON BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

At their August 2016 meeting, the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) discussed housekeeping edits to the HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The HMSMT is focusing on information that is likely to change over time and should therefore be presented in the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document. The HMSMT has reviewed the HMS FMP and offers the following general recommendations for housekeeping revisions:

- Chapter 1 (Introduction): The descriptions in section 1.6, Management Context, would be substantially shortened and revised to eliminate outdated information and make the descriptions less prone to falling out of date in the future.
- Chapter 2 (Management Philosophy) and Chapter 3 (Species in the Management Unit): Only minor copy edits are being considered.¹
- Chapter 4 (Preventing Overfishing and Achieving Optimum Yield): This material describes the framework for identifying optimum yield and status determination criteria (SDCs). A potential conflict exists between numeric reference points and SDCs based on the most recent assessments included in the current HMS SAFE Report and similar numeric values in the HMS FMP which have become outdated since the time of HMS FMP adoption. The HMSMT intends to describe the procedures for identifying reference points and SDCs in the HMS FMP, and providing current numeric values in HMS SAFE Reports, as a means to avoid potential confusion.
- Chapter 5 (Biennial Process for Specifying Management Reference Points and Management Measures): Only minor copy edits are being considered.
- Chapter 6 (Management Measures): This chapter would be revised to remove descriptions of fishery-specific management measures and focus on the “toolbox” of available measures that may be used for domestic management of HMS fisheries.
- Chapter 7 (Essential Fish Habitat): Only minor copy edits are being considered.
- Chapter 8 (Research and Data Needs for Management): The information in this chapter is currently out of date. In the past, the HMSMT has included updated information on research and data needs in the annual SAFE. This chapter would be reduced to a reference to the process by which the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) produces the Council’s research and data needs document every five years. The HMSMT will develop recommendations in support of the five-year SSC process and Research and Data Needs document.

¹ The term “copy edit” is used here to describe corrections in spelling, grammar, punctuation, cross-references, and similar non-substantive corrections.

The HMSMT has developed a procedure to communicate proposed edits to the Council. In recognition that some proposed changes could entail substantive changes in management, edits will be indicated in a marked-up version using “tracked changes”, with potentially substantive changes indicated by highlighted text. Consistent with the Year-at-a-Glance planning document (see Agenda Item G.6, Attachment 1), the HMSMT aims to present a marked up version of the FMP, showing specific changes to the FMP language, to the Council in November. However, if the revisions cannot be completed by the November meeting, the HMSMT would look to the Council to review proposed changes at the March 2017 meeting. Once the Council has reviewed and adopted proposed changes they would be transmitted to NMFS as an FMP amendment subject to Secretarial review and approval.

PFMC
08/16/16