

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

Under Agenda Item C.2, the Council was briefed on new approaches for allowing carryover of unused harvestable surplus of a stock or stock complex from one year to the next described in revised National Standard 1 Guidelines. The Council asked for feedback from advisory bodies on the need to incorporate these provisions into its Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) and Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plans (HMS FMPs). Carryover provisions apply to annual catch limits (ACLs) and allowable biological catches (ABCs). Since the Council does not set ACLs or ABCs for HMS management unit species, based on the “international exception” (MSA Section 303(a)(15)), the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) does not see a need to incorporate the new carryover provisions into the HMSFMP.

Known tasks in the HMSMT’s near-term workload include completing the FMP Amendment 4, including meeting with the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and making any necessary revisions to the HMS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report, preparing materials for the Council to consider for deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) permitting, and completing work on status determination criteria (SDC). The HMSMT intends to include numeric values of drift gillnet (DGN) catch and discards relative to performance metrics as part of the revised HMS SAFE Report in June.

Based on Council discussion in November 2016, the HMSMT interprets “development of a range of alternatives for DSBG permitting” to focus on the permitting aspect only, and not to include other alternatives necessary for full authorization, including a definition of the gear, a definition of active tending, reporting requirements, areas of gear authorization, seasons, etc. Until these additional components are addressed, the fishery could not be authorized. The HMSMT questions whether sufficient information has been collected under exempted fishing permits (EFPs) to support final action on authorization by September, particularly in light of the large number of new EFPs authorized at the March 2017 Council meeting.

The HMSMT notes that some pending tasks, such as analyzing a range of alternatives for DSBG permitting, can best be addressed over a series of meetings with sufficient time between them for drafting, analysis, and review of materials. The HMSMT appreciates the off-cycle meeting time scheduled in April to address SDC, DSBG, and Amendment 4. The HMSMT notes that the current year-at-a-glance schedule for June shows both a range of alternatives for DSBG permitting and a range of alternatives for authorizing a shallow-set longline fishery outside the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The HMSMT provides the following recommendations for future agenda planning:

1. Space out DSBG agenda items to allow sufficient time to develop and analyze a range of alternatives for permitting.

2. Avoid scheduling work on the ranges of alternatives for authorizing DSBG permits and for authorizing a shallow-set longline fishery outside the EEZ that does not allow sufficient time to complete required tasks.

PFMC
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