



## Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Herbert A. Pollard II, Chair | Charles A. Tracy, Executive Director

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 22, 2017

TO: Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel, Highly Migratory Species Management Team, and Interested Persons

FROM: Dr. Kit Dahl, Staff Officer for Highly Migratory Species

SUBJECT: March Council Meeting

The Council meets March 7-13, 2017, at the Hilton Hotel in Vancouver, Washington. The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will meet Thursday through Sunday, March 9-12. The HMSAS will be in the Discovery E Room and the HMSMT will be in the Discovery D Room. The meetings begin at 8 a.m. each day. Six HMS topics are on the Council agenda. I have also included the briefing materials for Agenda Item C.4, Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures, and C.5, Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning. Summaries of these topics follow.

#### J.1 National Marine Fisheries Report

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region will report on HMS Branch activities. The Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) will report on HMS-related research activities. As part of the SWFSC briefing, Dr. Jim Carretta will present a new statistical analysis of protected species bycatch in the California large mesh drift gillnet fishery. This agenda item is a briefing and no Council action will occur under this agenda item.

#### J.2 Update on Existing Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

Progress reports on EFPs to test deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) from the Pflegler Institute of Environmental Research (PIER) and Tim and Laura Ferguson will be presented under this agenda item. The Council originally recommended issuance of these EFPs in March 2015. The Council will make recommendations on the future conduct of these EFPs, as appropriate.

#### J.3 Proposed Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits

At its November 2016 meeting the Council preliminarily approved two applications, one from PIER to test linked buoy gear, and a second from Frederic Hepp to test the conventional DSBG design. The Council will be making its final recommendation on these two applications.

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In addition, the Council received three new DSBG EFP applications by the advanced briefing book deadline. The Council will be reviewing these applications and making recommendations.

In November 2016, the Council tasked the HMSMT with developing criteria for deciding if a DSBG EFP application could be approved in one Council meeting rather than the currently required two Council meetings. Based on any criteria proposed in a supplemental HMSMT report, the Council could make a final recommendation on the new DSBG EFP applications under consideration.

#### J.4 Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP)

The HMSMT has worked with Council staff to draft proposed “housekeeping” amendment language as Amendment 4. These changes would update descriptive passages in the FMP that have become inaccurate. These changes should facilitate the task of reviewing and revising required biological reference points, including status determination criteria (SDC) for stocks managed under the FMP. SDC are used by the Council and NMFS to determine if a stock is subject to overfishing or overfished. The HMSMT plans to continue working on this task in 2017. The Council will adopt the proposed HMS FMP Amendment 4 language for public review and provide further guidance. The Council is scheduled to take final action on the FMP amendment at its June 2017 meeting.

#### J.5 Recommendations for International Management Activities

The Thirteenth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) was held December in Nadi, Fiji, December 5-9, 2016. Council member Dorothy Lowman, who is a U.S. Commissioner, will report to the Council on this meeting.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission held an Extraordinary Meeting February 7-10 in La Jolla, California. NMFS will report on meeting outcomes.

The Council will consider these reports and provide recommendations, as appropriate.

#### J.6 Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5: Final Action Authorizing Federal Drift Gillnet (DGN) Permit

In September 2016, the Council adopted the two alternatives for creating a Federal DGN limited entry permit: no action and one action alternative. At the November 2016 Council meeting, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and NMFS submitted a report describing in detail how the transition to a Federal permit would work and the features of the Federal permit. At this meeting, the Council will adopt a final preferred alternative for authorizing a Federal limited entry permit for the California large mesh drift gillnet fishery and associated FMP amendment language. The FMP amendment language describes the features of the proposed Federal permit. NMFS will issue regulations based on the FMP language that will allow current California state DGN permit holders to qualify for the Federal permit. NMFS anticipates this will happen in early 2018, before the start of the 2018-2019 DGN fishing season.

I have included the materials for Agenda Item C.4, Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures. Under this agenda item the Council will be considering changes to Council Operating Procedure 1 affecting the procedures for submitting written public comment. The HMSAS, in particular, may wish to weigh in on these changes.

To help you keep abreast of topics at future Council meetings, I am also including the materials for Agenda Item C.5, Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning. You may wish to provide comments on what topics are proposed and at what meetings.

Paper copies of referenced briefing materials are enclosed. You may obtain electronic copies of all the meeting materials on our website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/briefing-books/>. We also post supplemental briefing materials on our website as they become available after distribution of the advanced briefing book.

Fun fact: In Vancouver it's illegal to catch a fish by throwing a rock at it.

As always, thank you for your service to the Council process.

KRD:kma

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.4: Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Item J.1: NMFS Report
3. Agenda Item J.2: Update on Existing Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)
4. Agenda Item J.3: Proposed Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits
5. Agenda Item J.4: Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP)
6. Agenda Item J.5: Recommendations for International Management Activities
7. Agenda Item J.6: Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5: Final Action Authorizing Federal Drift Gillnet (DGN) Permit
8. Agenda Item C.4: Membership Appointments and Council Operating Procedures
9. Agenda Item C.5: Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning
10. HMSAS and HMSMT Meeting Agendas
11. Hotel-related Information
12. Council Roster

PFMC

02/14/17