

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON PROPOSED DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) would like to preface our comments with a simple statement. In general, we support the testing of alternate gear types for harvesting swordfish. However, it appears that deep-set buoy gear/linked buoy gear (DSBG/LBG) will never match the efficiency of drift gillnet (DGN) in this fishery. That said, we make the following comments about the proposed DSBG/LBG exempted fishing permits (EFPs).

Individual EFP Applications Recommendations

HMSAS concurs with the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) with one exception, Mr. Phil Harris's application. The HMSAS recommends approval if Mr. Harris appears in person at the Council meeting and gives the estimated maximum *number of fishing days* that he has in mind.

Deep Set Buoy Gear

1. We have concerns about the total potential number of EFPs issued. We recommend that the Council consider a limited number of EFPs be issued for pre-determined geographic areas if it becomes necessary.
2. Consideration should be given to how many EFPs are required to get an adequate sample size for scientific analyses such as catch-per unit-of-effort (CPUE), bycatch, gear conflicts, etc.
3. We would like to see some type of criteria in place regarding the experience level of applicants. More experienced fishermen will reduce the "learning curve" involved in fishing the gear and reduce any safety concerns which may arise from inexperienced applicants.

Linked Buoy Gear (LBG)

The HMSAS supports the revised Pflieger Institute of Environmental Research (PIER) proposal for this LBG EFP, but has concerns about future expansion and would like the Council to move cautiously when authorizing the fishery.

The HMSAS recommends a one or two Council meeting process for approving EFPs, which is same as the HMSMT recommendation.