

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON AMENDMENT 4
TO THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR WEST COAST FISHERIES FOR HIGHLY
MIGRATORY SPECIES (HMS FMP)

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) greatly appreciates the efforts of the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) and Council Staff Member Dr. Kit Dahl for the exceptional efforts they have put forth in pursuing the Council's instruction to compose what is now known as Amendment 4 to the HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which is only supposed to be a "housekeeping" change to the FMP, without changing any substance.

On March 9, 2017, the HMSAS received the 16-page Supplemental National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report labeled "*Agenda Item J.4.a, Joint Report Between the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region and Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) On Amendment 4: Clarifying and Specifying Biological Reference Points*" and met with the HMSMT for a very helpful discussion and explanation of this report. The HMSAS also received a full briefing from Dr. Dahl on his version of the changes. In addition, the HMSAS has reviewed the 78-page "strike through version" of the housekeeping changes, and the 35-page clean version. The HMSAS also attended a two hour webinar with the HMSMT earlier this year on January 31, 2017.

Nevertheless, the review of these materials and the preparation of an educated analysis of the proposed changes requires more time than is available at the March Council meeting. In addition to examining the impact of deleting one-half of the materials from the FMP, there are a large number of informational charts and tables are being deleted. Many of these will be placed in the Stock Assessment Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report; however, at the moment it is not clear which ones. In working with the HMSMT, there is a listing being prepared of which of these will be deleted entirely and which will actually be moved to the SAFE report that is expected to be available in the near future.

Further, there are sections in the existing FMP which the HMSAS needs to review further, which may require additional deletions or additions. In summary, while progress is being made, the HMSAS requires additional time to complete this collaborative process of review with the HMSMT.

As an example of potential changes, the HMSAS wants to bring an issue to the Council concerning a potential difference in calculating overfished and overfishing that is currently under consideration in FMP Amendment 4. The Magnuson-Stevens Act has clear guidelines for determining overfished and overfishing; however, most HMS are regulated by Pacific regional fishery management organization (RFMOs) that may have a different basis to calculate overfished and overfishing. The HMSAS requests recognition that Section 304(i) in the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires the overfished and overfishing calculations are based on the RFMO calculations to insure the U.S. fleets are not curtailed to the favor the other international fishing fleets.