

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON  
AUTHORIZATION OF DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR AND FEDERAL PERMITTING

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) reviewed Agenda Item H.3.a, HMSMT Report, and offers the following comments on the proposed preliminary range of alternatives.

**Purpose and Need**

The HMSAS agrees with the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) purpose and need statement, especially the fact that it refers to deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) as a commercially viable **addition to the suite** of legal swordfish gear types. The HMSAS would like to emphasize that this purpose and need are not directed at reducing the participants in the drift gillnet (DGN) fishery.

**Alternatives**

***Gear Description Alternatives***

The HMSAS recommends that standard buoy gear and linked buoy gear (SBG + LBG) be authorized under one permit.

***Geographic Area Alternatives***

The HMSAS recommends that SBG and LBG be authorized in all Federal waters of the U.S. West Coast (CA + OR + WA).

***Permitting Alternatives***

The HMSAS recognizes that the HMSMT did a great job of laying out a complete range of permitting alternatives. We feel that it would be premature to identify a preferred alternative at this point. The HMSAS believes it is necessary to wait to see what data comes from the groups of new EFPs before attempting to identify a preferred alternative.

*Re: Open Access:* We are opposed to DSBG being authorized as an open access fishery in the Southern California Bight at this time.

*Re: Permit Ceiling/Phase-in:* We tentatively support this approach to DSBG authorization.

**Alternatives Discussed but Not Further Considered**

In response to comments submitted by other interested parties regarding the range of permitting Alternatives for DSBG, two alternates on the HMSAS reached out to all active participants in the DGN fishery and asked them if they would consider trading in their DGN permit and gear for a DSBG permit. Eighteen out of the twenty active DGN permit holders responded to the question, and all eighteen respondents stated that they are not interested in trading in their DGN permits.

### ***Gear Tending Requirements***

The HMSAS agrees with the Enforcement Consultants' (EC) recommendations. The EC and HMSAS (which includes a DSBG exempted fishing permit (EFP) participant) are secure in our understanding of gear retrieval requirements.

### ***Species Retention Alternatives***

The HMSAS supports retention of all species, except species currently prohibited in the HMS Fishery Management Plan.

## **Other Considerations**

### ***Permit Assignment***

The HMSAS supports DSBG permits being issued to the vessel, and that landings can be attributed to an operator that does not own the vessel.

### ***Permit Transfers***

The HMSAS recommends that DSBG permits be freely transferable.

### ***Permit Durability***

The HMSAS recommends year to year issuance with no contingency for surrendering the permit such as minimum landing requirements.

### ***Observer Coverage***

The HMSAS recommends that if future EFPs continue to demonstrate negligible bycatch, then future authorization of the fishery should have minimal observer coverage.

### ***Training Requirements***

The HMSAS recommends that DSBG permittees should meet periodically to exchange knowledge of the fishery.

PFMC  
06/11/17