

June 2017 PFMC Meeting

H.3 HMSMT Report

AUTHORIZATION OF DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR AND FEDERAL PERMITTING

Overview

- HMSMT has developed multiple alternatives for each aspect of authorizing a DSBG fishery
 - Gear Description
 - Geographic Area
 - Permitting
 - Gear Tending
 - Species Retention
 - Multiple Gears On A Single Trip
 - Fishing Season
 - Other Considerations: Permit Assignment, Permit Transfers, Permit Durability, Observer Coverage, Allowed Bait, Training

Gear Description

- Alternative 1: Authorize use of Deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) , limiting authorization to the “traditional buoy gear” proposed in the original PIER EFP
- Alternative 2: Authorize use of Deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) – overarching gear type that would include multiple configurations:
 - Standard buoy gear (SBG) - thus far been referred to as DSBG or “traditional” buoy gear
 - Linked buoy gear (LBG) – as defined and recently approved for EFP testing.
- Other Considerations: For Alternative 2, Council could delay use of this gear by the authorized fishery until sufficient EFP information has been collected.
- Not Further Considered:
 - Authorize LBG only
 - Authorize generic configurations of SBG and/or LBG

Geographic Area

- Alternative 1: Authorize gear in all West Coast federal waters
- Alternative 2: Authorize gear in federal waters off CA + OR
- Other Considerations: Minimum bottom depth (150 fa) for DSBG activity to ensure gear is being used to target intended species
- Not Further Considered:
 - Limit authorization to federal waters in the SCB or SCB+Central CA
 - Limit authorization to federal waters off CA
 - Authorize fishery in state waters > 1 nautical mile from the Channel Islands
 - Prohibit fishing in the PLCA

Permitting

- Alternative 1: Open Access fishery
- Alternative 2: Cap on total number of permits, permits issued in multiple phases, e.g.:
 - DGN permit holders > EFP participants > harpoon permit holders
 - Landings requirement?
- Alternative 3: Limited Entry permit with qualification criteria
 - DGN Permit
 - Harpoon Permit
 - EFP
 - Adopt a control date?
 - Lottery (for new additions)

Permitting (cont.)

- Alternative 4: Geographic Limited Entry Permit
 - A: LE in California; OA in WA + OR
 - B: LE in SCB; OA in WA + OR + rest of CA
- Other Considerations:
 - Guidance re: number of EFPs to issue for fishing with SBG in the SCB; EFPs fishing concurrently with harpoon/troll gear or to address other data gaps?
 - Gradual growth in fleet size to prevent supply from outpacing expansion of the market for DSBG-caught swordfish
- Not Further Considered:
 - LE permits based on swordfish landings (all gear types)
 - Trade-in option
 - Area registration

Gear Tending

- Current EC definition of active tending:
 - Maintain a distance of no more than 3nm from any one piece of gear, maintain properly configured gear in accordance with EFP terms and conditions.
 - Each piece of SBG and the terminal ends of LBG marked with a radar reflector, flags and buoys marked with the vessel's official number.
- Potential changes/considerations
 - Is the current definition appropriate for DSBG use outside of the SCB?
 - Specify a total footprint area for DSBG (SBG, LBG or SBG+LBG)
 - Specify concurrent gear use is allowed, so long as prosecution of the non-DSBG fishing activity does not prevent active tending of DSBG gear
 - Clarify requirement to initiate gear retrieval by sunset

Species Retention

- Alternative 1: All species, except those prohibited by HMS FMP
- Alternative 2: All species, except those prohibited by HMS FMP + additional species of concern
- Other Considerations:
 - Develop a list of “additional species of concern” with advisory body input
 - Requirements for separation of catch by gear type or incidental catch allowances for non-HMS species

Multiple Gears

- Considerations:
 - Active tending requirement will limit concurrent gear use
 - Concurrent gear use vs gears used on the same trip
- Not Further Considered:
 - Authorize a limited set of additional gears
 - Prohibit concurrent gear use
 - Prohibit use of additional gears on a DSBG trip

Fishing Season

- Considerations:
 - HMS FMP establishes fishing season as April 1 – March 31
 - DSBG fishery likely to operate in summer months
 - No information to suggest seasonal restrictions are warranted

Other: Permit Assignment

- Alternative 1: Assigned to an individual, vessel specified on the permit
- Alternative 2: Assigned to the vessel
- Alternative 3: Assigned to the vessel owner
- Other Considerations:
 - Alternative 2: Permit owner doesn't need to be the vessel owner. Specified vessel could be changed.
 - Could include an owner-on-board requirement
 - Landings could be attributed to vessel operators (not just vessel owner)

Other: Permit Transfers

- Alternative 1: Freely transferrable permits
- Alternative 2: Permit transfers restricted by fishing activity
- Other Considerations:
 - Suggest the AS develop approaches to potential limitations on permit transfers

Other: Permit Durability

- Alternative 1: Year-to-year issuance
 - Number of permits could be adjusted annually
 - DSBG activity required to renew?
 - Insufficient effort > permits could be reassigned (ranked waiting list, lottery)
- Alternative 2: Permit doesn't expire
 - Unless insufficient DSBG activity within specified time frame
 - Comprehensive review after 5 years to generate additional criteria
 - Minimum landings requirement, landing frequency, geographic area of catch/landing

Other: Observer Coverage

- Considerations
 - Thus far, DSBG fishery generates low bycatch
 - If mandating a specific level of observer coverage, who would pay?

Other: Allowed Bait

- Considerations
 - Fishing activity to date indicates a low risk of sea turtle bycatch with DSBG, so no concerns with use of squid bait
 - Recommend allowing use of artificial lures

Other: Training

- Considerations

- Should training be required for DSBG fishery participants?
 - If so, required for all permit holders or those without prior experience under an EFP?
- Important for new entrants to understand the purpose and intent of DSBG, need for active tending, etc.
- Input from EFP participants, industry, and NMFS will be useful