



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 12, 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: June 2017 Council Meeting

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meets June 8-14, 2017, at the Doubletree by Hilton Spokane City Center Hotel in Spokane, Washington. The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) and Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will meet Saturday through Tuesday, June 10-13. The HMSAS will be in Salon II and the HMSMT will be in Salon III. The meetings begin at 8 a.m. each day. Five HMS topics are on the Council agenda. I have also included the briefing materials for Agenda Item C.3- Legislative Matters, C.6- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) White Paper on Best Scientific Information Available, C.8- Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning, and I.1- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Strategic Review. Summaries of these topics follow.

H.1 National Marine Fisheries Service Report

NMFS West Coast Region will report on HMS Branch activities. The Southwest Fisheries Science Center will report on HMS-related research activities. This agenda item is a briefing and no Council action will occur under this agenda item.

H.2 Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP)

At its March 2017 meeting, the Council considered draft proposed “housekeeping” amendment language as Amendment 4. These changes would update descriptive passages in the FMP that have become inaccurate and facilitate Council engagement in NMFS’s stock status determination process. The Council deferred adopting the proposed amendment language for public review in order to allow more time for the HMSAS to review and develop comments on the proposed changes. A joint meeting of the HMSAS and HMSMT is scheduled for the morning of June 10 to discuss HMSAS concerns and address any outstanding questions. Based on Council guidance in March 2017, a shift in the biennial management cycle meeting schedule from June-September-November to September-November-March is additionally proposed (see the HMSMT Report for proposed amendment language).

Although not part of the FMP amendment, under this agenda item the HMSMT has identified those HMS stocks for which the Pacific Council would request to be considered the “appropriate council” pursuant to section 304(i) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

The Council is scheduled to adopt the amendment language for public review at this meeting and take final action on the FMP amendment at its September 2017 meeting.

H.3 Authorization of Deep-Set Buoy Gear and Federal Permitting

In November 2016, the Council directed the HMSMT to develop a preliminary range of alternatives to authorize a deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) fishery for Council consideration at this meeting. The Council is scheduled to review this proposed range of alternatives, along with input from other advisory bodies, and provide guidance for their further development. The Council is scheduled to adopt a range of alternatives for public review at its September 2017 meeting. The HMSMT submitted a report outlining the range of alternatives, based on its meeting in April 2017. A joint session is scheduled for the afternoon of June 10th so that the HMSMT can brief the HMSAS on what it has proposed and solicit feedback.

H.4 Proposed Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits

The Council has received 19 applications for DSBG exempted fishing permits (EFPs). Two of these, from Mr. Roger Cullen and Mr. Arthur Lorton/Mr. David Haworth, were originally submitted at the March 2017 meeting. The Council asked for more information and/or revisions to the application. The remaining applications are new. The Council will be seeking advice from the HMSMT and HMSAS in order to make a recommendation to NMFS on issuing permits based on these applications. In March 2017, the Council adopted a process to decide if a DSBG EFP application could be approved in one Council meeting rather than the previously required two Council meetings. Based on these criteria, the Council could make a final recommendation on any of the new applications at this meeting as well as the two resubmitted applications.

H.5 Recommendations for International Management Activities

The situation summary describes recent and upcoming regional fishery management organization (RFMO) meetings. Conservation of Pacific bluefin tuna is of particular interest, because of the stock’s importance to West Coast recreational and commercial fisheries. Both the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) will be considering conservation and management measures for tropical tunas (bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin) at their meetings later this year. Between the June and September 2017 Council meetings, the WCPFC Northern Committee will meet to decide on a second rebuilding target for Pacific bluefin; the IATTC will hold its annual meeting; and the WCPFC will hold an intersessional meeting to further develop the draft measure for tropical tunas, to be considered at its December annual meeting.

The Council will consider this information and provide recommendations relevant to upcoming RFMO meetings, as appropriate.

I have scheduled a briefing on the HMSAS's agenda for Agenda Item I.1, National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Strategic Review. Both advisory bodies have the option of commenting on the enforcement priorities presented in this review.

For informational purposes I have included materials on two administrative items on the June Council agenda. These are Agenda Item C.3, Legislative Matters, and Agenda Item C.6, National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) White Paper on Best Scientific Information Available.

To help you keep abreast of topics at future Council meetings, I am also including the materials for Agenda Item C.8, 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: Spokane is the smallest city to host a World's Fair.

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

KRD:ael

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.4: Council Meeting Agenda
2. Agenda Item H.1: NMFS Report
3. Agenda Item H.2: Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP)
4. Agenda Item H.3: Authorization of Deep-Set Buoy Gear and Federal Permitting
5. Agenda Item H.4: Proposed Deep-Set Buoy Gear Exempted Fishing Permits
6. Agenda Item H.5: Recommendations for International Management Activities
7. Agenda Item C.3: Legislative Matters
8. Agenda Item C.6: National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) White Paper on Best Scientific Information Available
9. Agenda Item C.8: Future Council Meeting Agenda and Workload Planning
10. Agenda Item I.1: National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Strategic Review
11. HMSAS and HMSMT Meeting Agendas
12. Informational Reports
13. Hotel-related Information
14. Council Roster

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