

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL (HMSAS) STATEMENT ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) offers the following comments on International Management Activities.

1. Supportive letter endorsing the nomination of Michael Thompson on the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

The HMSAS asks the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) to write a letter of support in the nomination of Michael Thompson to serve as a commissioner on the IATTC. Mr. Thompson has experience with the IATTC having served as Don Hansen's alternate at the July 2017 meeting in Mexico City. His service would facilitate communications between the IATTC and the PFMC.

2. North Pacific Albacore – Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)

The HMSAS supports the ongoing efforts to develop an MSE for North Pacific albacore; and appreciates the Council's interest and support. The HMSAS wishes to thank the Council for funding two HMSAS representatives to the recently completed MSE workshop. We hope similar accommodations can be made for future MSE workshops as well.

The HMSAS also recommends it would be beneficial for a webinar and more specialized seminars on the MSE process to be run by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) MSE representatives (Steve Teo and Desiree Tomassi). The seminars would focus on potential impacts and benefits to U.S. harvesters. These should be held in early 2018.

3. Pacific Bluefin Tuna

- Commercial trip limits for 2018

NMFS has indicated an intent to issue a proposed rule later this month which would impose a 1-metric ton (mt) trip limit for all commercial U.S. vessels except for drift gillnet vessels, which would be subject to a 2-mt trip limit, throughout all of 2018 or until the 2018 catch limit is reached and NMFS closes the fishery. The HMSAS recommends that a 2-mt trip limit be adopted for 2018 without regard to gear type. At two tons, it will not be economically feasible for a directed purse seine fishery to operate, so any fears of controlling that aspect of the fishery are unwarranted. Two tons will allow the larger pole-and-line vessels to participate in this fishery and supplement their other operations.

- Preventing resource waste in the future

We recommend that NMFS and the State of California perform a review of how the fishery was allowed to exceed the 425-mt quota; and discuss what measures can be taken to ensure

this doesn't happen in future years. This may result in establishing a joint NMFS/California Department of Fish and Wildlife/Highly Migratory Species Management Team/HMSAS task force for developing a communications strategy for future years to keep bluefin landings within the U.S. quota. Examples of potential measures to address this are:

1. Limiting a specific vessel's number of trips in a week. This could be done by adding a time element to a trip limit. For example, a 25-mt trip limit; with 72-hours between trips.
  2. Allow the fishery to operate 5-days a week. For example, the fishery could be closed Sunday noon through Tuesday noon.
  3. Pre-trip notifications after X percent of quota landed.
- Moving forward, the HMSAS recommends the PFMC works with the State Department in an effort to increase the U.S. share of the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) Quota. IATTC Resolution C-16-08 states, "During 2017 and 2018, in the IATTC Convention Area, total commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by all CPCs shall not exceed 6,600 metric tons, for an effective maximum annual catch rate of 3,300 metric tons per year by all CPCs combined." See <https://www.iattc.org/PDFFiles2/Resolutions/C-16-08-Conservation-and-management-of-Pacific-bluefin-tuna.pdf> (Part 2, Bullet 2). That the U.S. is only allocated 9 percent of the EPO wide commercial quota is concerning to the HMSAS.

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