

Deep-Set Buoy Gear Authorization

A Means to Reduce Bycatch in the Swordfish Fishery

Comments on Agenda Item I.2
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Outline

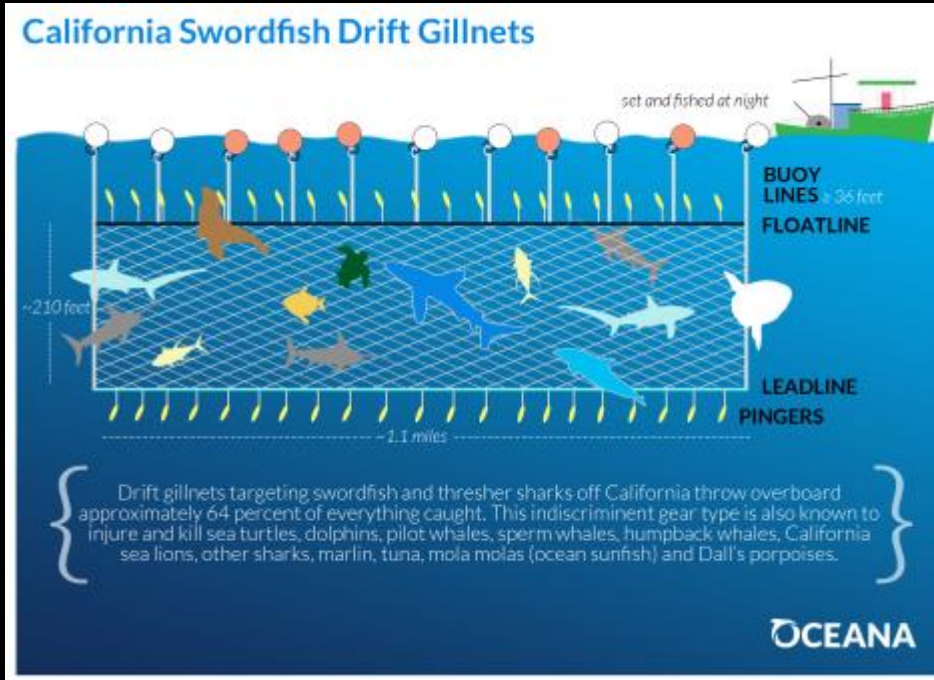
- Timeline
- DSBG versus DGN
- Preferred Alternative
- Limited Entry
- Permit Issuance
- Trade-in Option
- Summary



Timeline

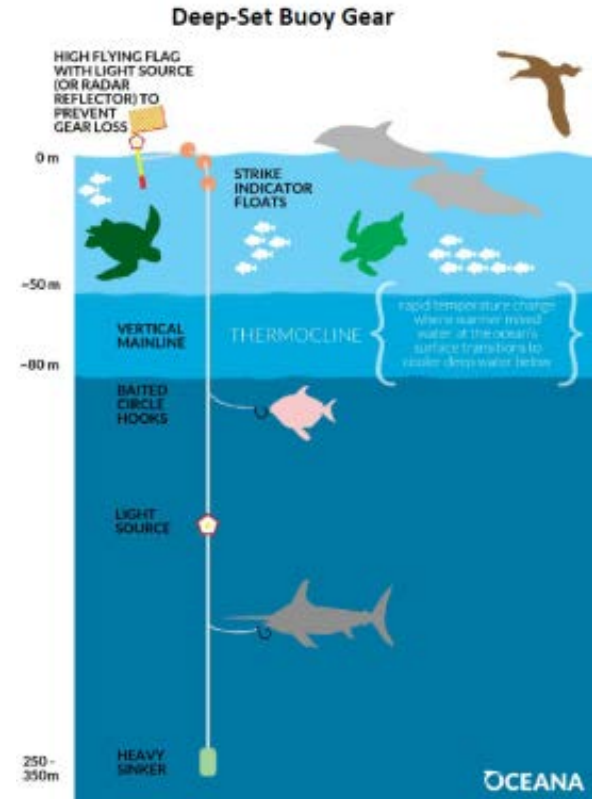
- DSBG experiments 2011-2015
- DSBG introduced to Council in 2012
- PFMC recommends DGN hard caps & 100% monitoring Sept. 2015
- DSBG EFPs 2016-Present
- PFMC DSBG Scoping March 2016
- PFMC DSBG Initial ROA June 2017

Night



Drift gillnets

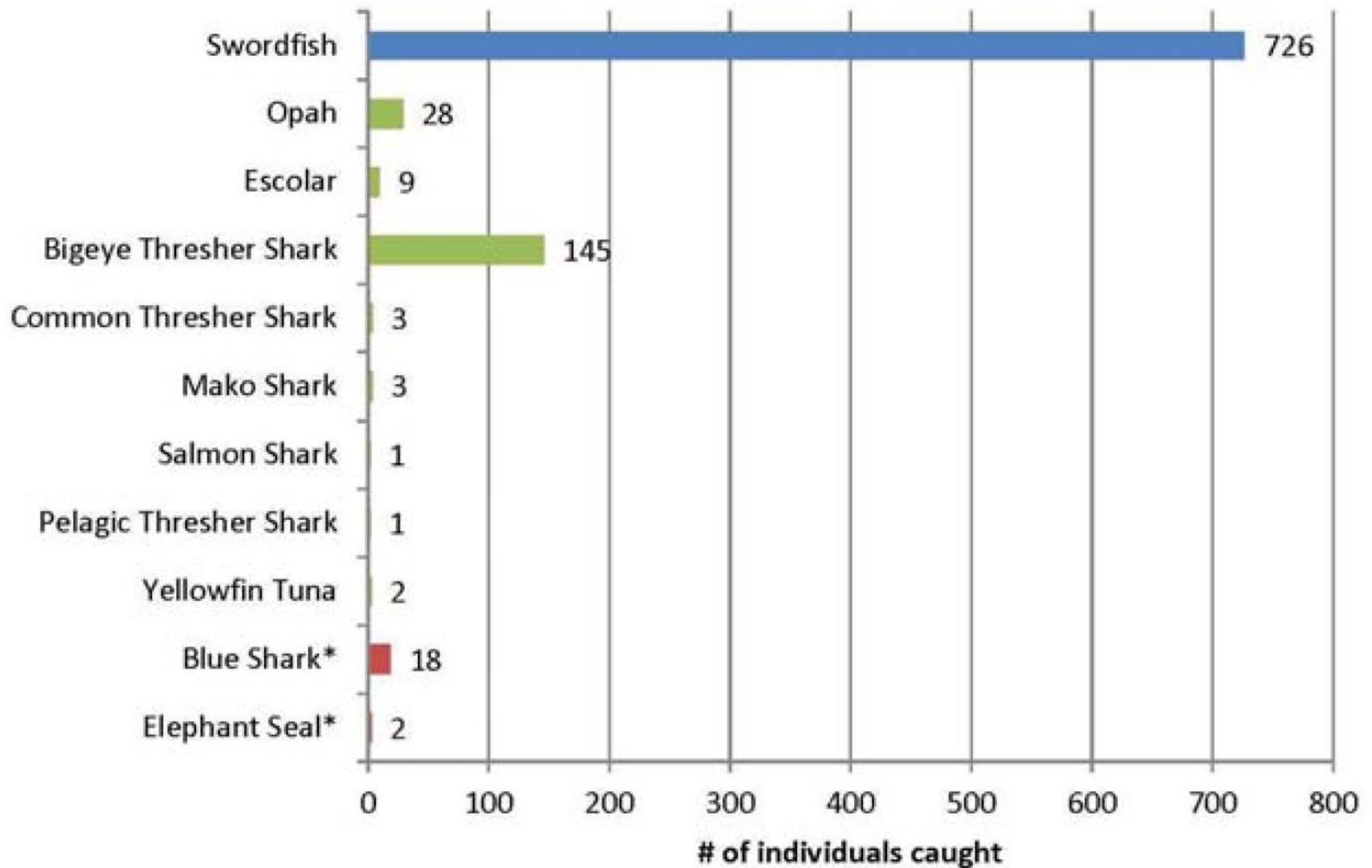
- Surface fishing at night
- Among highest discard rates in US (>60%)
- Over 70 species discarded as bycatch
- No hard cap rule; no monitoring rule
- Kills or injures multiple ESA-listed species and dozens of marine mammal species



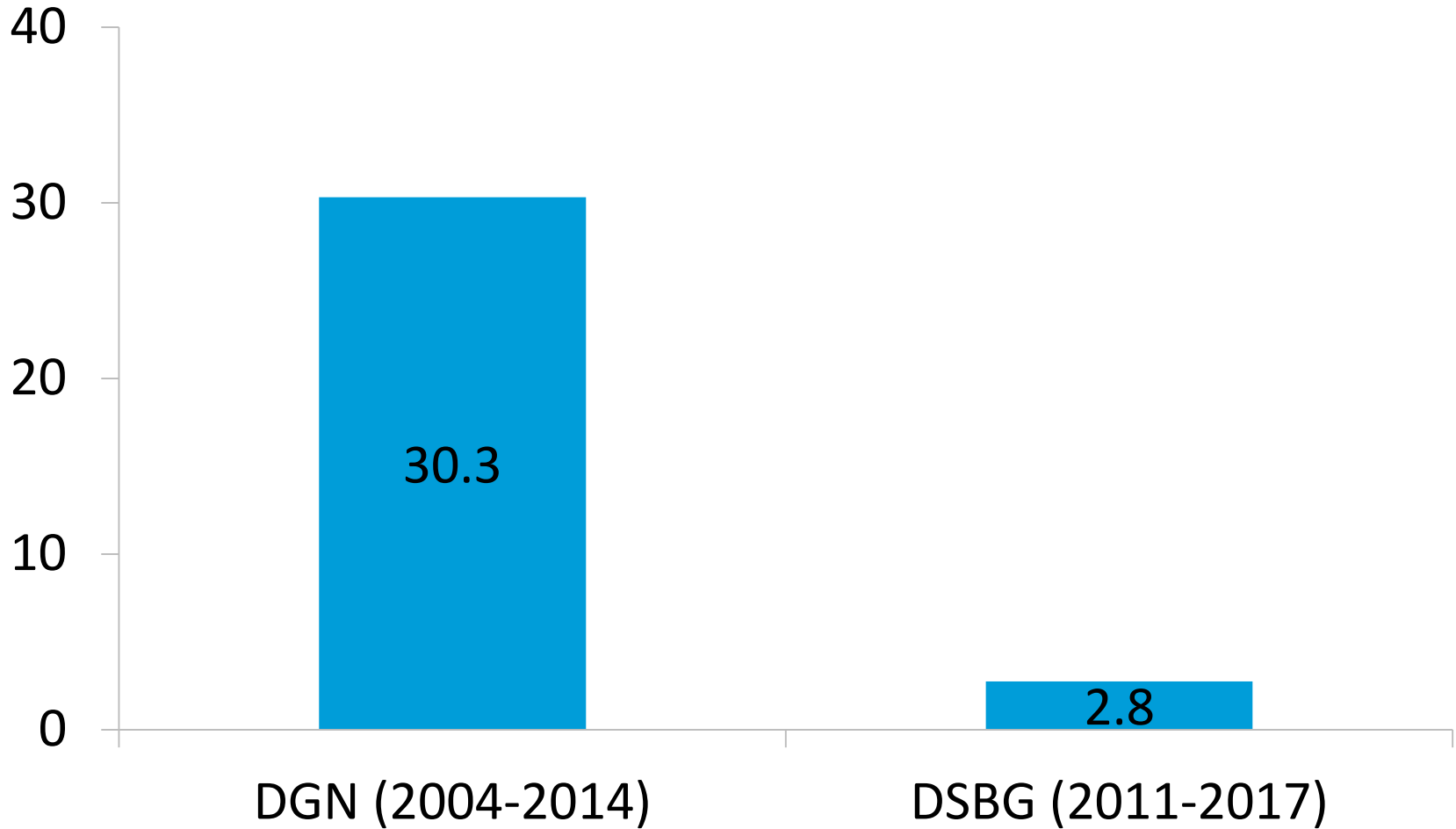
Deep-set buoy gear

- Deep fishing in day
- 98% marketable species
- Active tending → Minimal bycatch mortality
- Profitable, higher value catch

PIER Deep-Set Buoy Gear Trials + EFP Catch 2011-Jan. 2017
81% Swordfish, 98% marketable catch



Marine Mammal Takes per 1000 Swordfish



Management tools to minimize DGN bycatch

- 100% monitoring
- Hard caps on bycatch
- Phase-out DGN gear
- Reduce # of DGN permits and/or effort
- Time/area closures

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DSBG Authorization –Top Priority

- Achieve DGN bycatch reduction in light of NMFS' withdrawal of DGN hard caps
- Significant interest in the fishery
- Reduced observer costs to DSBG fishermen
- Increase U.S. West Coast swordfish production, support development of new markets

Recommendations

- Authorize DSBG with ability to phase-in LBG
- Establish Limited Entry Program
 - Purpose: reduce bycatch
 - Initial allocation based on EFP pioneers and active DGN swordfish fishermen
 - Trade-in option



Limited Entry

Question 1: Can the PFMC establish a limited entry program for DSBG?

YES!

- Broad authority to establish limited entry under MSA to achieve Optimum Yield 16 U.S.C. § 1853(b)(6)
- 50 CFR 600.330(c): Limited entry may be used to
 - “contribute to economic efficiency or conservation.”
 - “combat overfishing, overcrowding, or overcapitalization” or in an “unutilized or underutilized fishery,” to “reduce the chance that these conditions will adversely affect the fishery in the future.”
 - “to provide adequate economic return to pioneers in a new fishery.”

Limited Entry

- Question 2: Should the Council authorize a limited entry fishery?
 - Reward DSBG fishery pioneers
 - Address DGN conservation concerns- incentive to reduce bycatch
 - Prevent overcrowding
 - Controlled growth of new fishery

Trade-in option

- Active DGN permit holders may trade-in DGN permit and gear in exchange for a transferable DSBG permit
- Strictly voluntary
- Transforms existing LE DGN permits without creating new LE permits with market value
- A DSBG permit could become more valuable than a DGN permit
- Helps compensate fishermen who voluntarily surrender DGN permit/gear
- Links DSBG authorization to DGN bycatch minimization goals

Proposed Initial Permit Issuance

DSBG Eligibility	Rationale	Transferable?	Max potential #
Original EFP participants	Reward fishery pioneers	No	6
Active* DGN permit holders	Reduce DGN effort/bycatch	No	25
Active* DGN permit trade-in	Reduce DGN permits/bycatch	Yes	25
Total			56

*Active defined by landings since 2012

PFMC would evaluate additional permit issuance during biennial specifications

Summary

- DSBG is the best available path to a sustainable West Coast swordfish fishery
- Do not delay: Authorize and establish a limited entry DSBG permit program with a DGN trade-in component in June 2018
- New opportunity to fish with clean gear and reduce bycatch

