

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT
ON PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF NON-DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR EFPs AND
RESUBMISSION OF PREVIOUS DEEP-SET-BUOY GEAR EFP APPLICATIONS

Non-Deep Set Buoy Gear (DSBG) Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

On February 28, 2018, the NMFS West Coast Regional Administrator received an EFP application from Dr. John Hall to fish for swordfish, and other HMS, with deep-set longline gear within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. This fishing activity/gear is currently prohibited under the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP).

NMFS published a Federal Register Notice of receipt of the application ([83 FR 26268](#)). The application proposes fishing the gear, which has a mainline of 5 nautical miles, year-round, with 100 percent observer coverage. Upon review of the application, NMFS staff discussed additional mitigation measures with Dr. Hall and recommended that he submit his application for the Council to review during its June 2018 meeting. On May 10, 2018, Dr. Hall submitted a revised application to the Council ([June 2018 G.6 Attachment 2](#)). The revised application includes additional bycatch mitigation measures beyond circle hooks and finfish bait. Prior to proceeding, NMFS will consider Council discussions and recommendations, as well as any comments received on the Federal Register Notice.

Resubmission of Previous DSBG EFP Applications

In the same Federal Register Notice (83 FR 26268) NMFS announced receipt of EFPs recommended by the Council during its November 2017 and March 2018 meetings for approval and preliminary approval. Of the three recommended for preliminary approval, two submitted the necessary follow-up information acknowledging the observer requirements for EFP participation ([June 2018 G.6.b Public Comment 1](#), and [June 2018, G.6.b, Supp. Public Comment 2](#)). At the March 2018 meeting, the Council also recommended that two applicants resubmit applications. Of those, one re-submitted an application ([June 2018 G.6 Attachment 1](#)). The current National Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment and Endangered Species Act informal consultation may accommodate the March 2018 applications under the vessel limits analyzed (up to 60 standard DSBG and 15 DSLBG vessels), dependent upon how many EFPs are issued in 2018. The status of current EFP applications can be viewed on [the NMFS West Coast Region website](#).