

**Agenda Item G.7.a**  
**Supplemental NMFS Presentation 1**  
**June 2018**



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

**West Coast**  
**Region**

**National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)**  
**Report on Swordfish Management Project**  
**Planning and Review of Observer Coverage**

**Agenda Item G7**

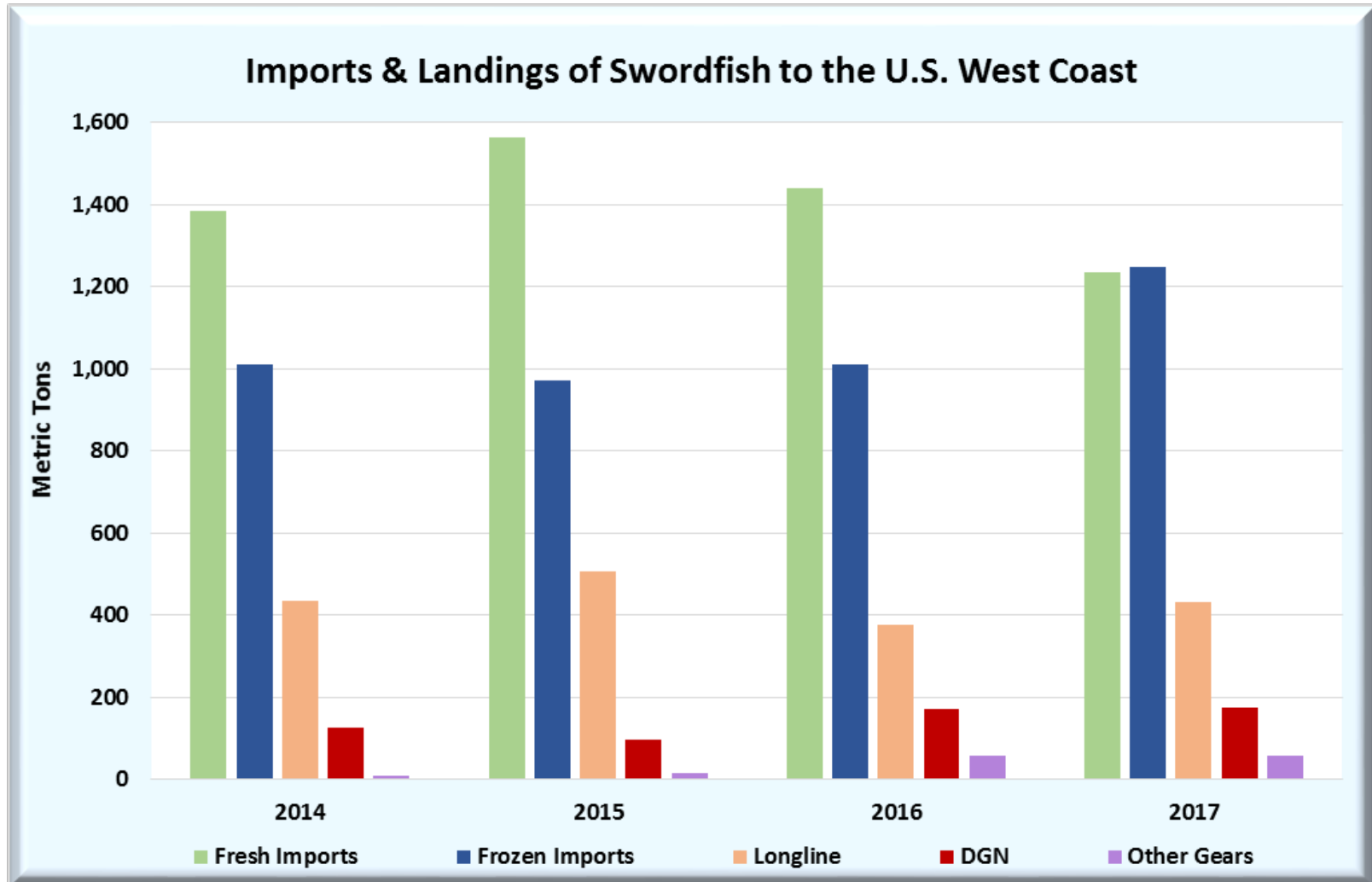
**Heidi Taylor**

June 12, 2018

# Background

- In 2015, the Council published its draft Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan (SMMP) to guide management of a holistic West Coast swordfish fishery
- Section 3 of the 2015 draft SMMP outlines three goals:
  - (1) reduce protected species bycatch in the swordfish fishery through mitigation, gear innovation, and individual accountability
  - (2) reduce unmarketable finfish catch through the same mechanisms
  - (3) support the economic viability of the swordfish fishery

# U.S. West Coast Swordfish Fishery Overview



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## Landings of swordfish by fishery for the whole U.S. West Coast

Year	Metric Tons						Percent					
	DGN	Harp.	LL	DSBG	Other	Total	DGN	Harp.	LL	DSBG	Other	Total
2008	406.1	48.0	59.1		17.9	531.1	76.5%	9.0%	11.1%	0.0%	3.4%	100%
2009	252.6	49.8	106.0		0.2	408.6	61.8%	12.2%	25.9%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
2010	61.6	37.4	270.7		*	369.8	16.7%	10.1%	73.2%	0.0%	*	100%
2011	119.0	24.3	476.2		*	619.5	19.2%	3.9%	76.9%	0.0%	*	100%
2012	118.2	5.4	279.2			402.7	29.4%	1.3%	69.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
2013	101.8	6.4	424.5		0.2	533.0	19.1%	1.2%	79.6%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
2014	126.5	5.0	436.3	*	*	567.9	22.3%	0.9%	76.8%	*	*	100%
2015	96.2	5.3	506.3	14.1	2.4	624.4	15.4%	0.9%	81.1%	2.3%	0.4%	100%
2016	192.6	25.5	377.3	32.5	1.3	629.1	30.6%	4.0%	60.0%	5.2%	0.2%	100%
2017	175.7	24.5	433.2	41.1	6.1	680.5	25.8%	3.6%	63.7%	6.0%	0.9%	100%

\*Confidential data (less than 3 vessels or dealers) suppressed. Totals for non-confidential data only.

- LL (pelagic longline) includes both Hawaii and HMS FMP permitted vessels. (Note that only Hawaii permitted vessels may target swordfish but HMS permitted vessels may land swordfish incidentally.)

# ACTION 1: Reduce bycatch in the DGN fishery through hard caps and performance standards

- Performance standards have been established for finfish and non-ESA-listed mammals, which are routinely reviewed by the Council
- NMFS routinely monitors DGN interactions with all non-target species
- NMFS recently made a negative determination on the Council's proposed hard caps regulation
  - Due in part to significant adverse economic impacts to the small entities without alternatives identified to reduce costs that could be implemented
  - NMFS suggested the Council could minimize economic impacts by specifying a reduced time or area that the fishery would be closed if a cap was reached
- NMFS developed statistical methods to better estimate rare-event bycatch (regression tree method) and is seeking funds to test the feasibility of electronic monitoring (EM) for the DGN fleet, especially for unobservable vessels

## ACTION 2: Limit fishing effort in the DGN fishery

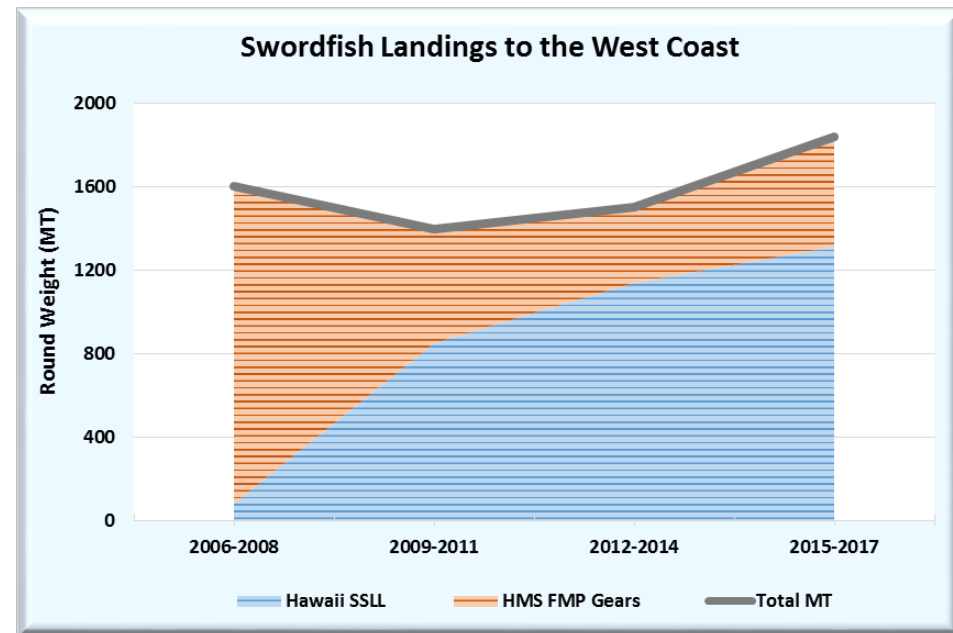
- Between 1996 and 2017, the number of DGN permits (active or inactive) issued by the state of California declined from 167 to 69
- NMFS issued a final rule establishing a Federal LE DGN permit in March 2018, based on Council recommendation
  - Originally intended to transition permit program from state to federal
  - All state permit-holders qualified for the federal permit.
- The Council discussed further limitations on participation in the DGN fleet after the federal permit was established
  - NMFS provided example approaches (e.g., limiting permits based on bycatch reduction goals or transitioning DGN to other gear types).
- The state of California continues to require DGN fishermen to obtain a state permit
- Given these circumstances, the Council may wish to revise its stated Measure to compensate state permit holders

# ACTION 3: Allow access to the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area (PLCA)

- The PLCA was implemented in 2001 to mitigate takes of endangered Pacific leatherback sea turtles by the DGN fleet
  - A recent study (Eguchi et al., 2017) showed the PLCA is still the shortest and most effective closure to balance sea turtle avoidance and fishing
- In February 2015, the Alliance for Sustainable Fisheries (ACSF) submitted an EFP application to fish with modified DGN gear in time/area zones, including in the PLCA
  - The Council recommended approval of the EFP application, but suggested adjustments to the proposed fishing activities
  - NMFS is interested in testing dynamic ocean modeling tools (e.g., Eco-Cast) as proposed in this EFP
  - However, NMFS remains concerned about approving access to allow testing with DGN gear in the PLCA at this time

# ACTION 4: Develop longline fisheries

- In 2004, NMFS provided the Council with mitigation measures to consider when it disapproved the longline portion (i.e., fishing outside of the EEZ) of the HMS FMP
- Studies show longline gear modifications (e.g., circle hooks, & finfish bait, etc.) have been effective in reducing bycatch (Swimmer et al. 2017; Foster et al. 2012)
- SFD is in the final stages of its ESA-consultation on the EFP application proposing to test longline fishing in the EEZ under a suite of recommended mitigation measures
- NMFS continues to support Council consideration of managing a longline fishery under the HMS FMP, as longlining produces the majority of swordfish landings to the U.S. West Coast





# ACTION 5: Develop deep-set buoy gear (DSBG)

- In 2015, NMFS issued 5 EFPs to the Pflieger Institute of Environmental Science (PIER) to assess the potential of DSBG fishing
  - Preliminary results showed this gear to be effective for catching swordfish with minimal bycatch
- NMFS received applications for DSBG EFP's from 51 fishermen, which were reviewed by the Council
  - NMFS started issuing EFPs to vessels to fish with standard DSBG, following completion of a protected species workshop
  - NMFS plans to issue EFPs to for up to 12 vessels to fish linked DSBG for the 2018/2019 fishing season
- The Council has been considering the authorization of DSBG as a legal gear type under the HMS FMP, and plans to gather input from its advisory bodies on criteria for a potential LE permit system during its September 2018 meeting

# Questions?