Agenda Item H.6.b
Supplemental Public Presentation 2
September 2018

September 2018 PFMC – Agenda Item H.6
Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan

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References:

1.) March 2014 PFMC - Item K.5 – Supplemental Attachment 2

Letter from SWFSC regarding recent comments by Turtle Island Restoration Network on NOAA Fisheries swordfish research and Collaborative Fisheries Research (CFR) West Project

http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/K5a_SUP_ATT2_SWFSC_TIRN_RESPONSE_MAR2014BB.pdf

2.) June 2015 PFMC - Item E.3 – Supplemental Public Comment 2

Evaluating Management Scenarios to Revitalize the California Commercial Swordfish Fishery - Bren School of Environmental Science & Management

Pages 79-188: http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/E3b_SupPubCom2_Full_E-Only_JUN2015BB.pdf

Purpose of the Plan

Based on Four Fishery Management Goals

1. Reduce protected species bycatch to the extent practicable in the swordfish fishery through mitigation, gear innovation, and individual accountability.
2. Reduce unmarketable and prohibited finfish catch to the extent practicable in the swordfish fishery through mitigation, gear innovation, and individual accountability.
3. Support the economic viability of the swordfish fishery so that it can meet demand for a fresh, high quality, locally-caught product and reduce reliance on imported seafood.
4. Promote and support a wide range of harvest strategies for swordfish off the West Coast.

Re: Fishery Management Goal #1

- The MSA stipulates that NOAA sustainably manage both target and bycatch species populations. NOAA's federal mandate under the MSA ***is not to*** eliminate all bycatch, but rather to minimize bycatch while enabling the sustainable catch of marketable species to meet the demand of consumers for locally sourced seafood
- NOAA's role ***is to*** minimize bycatch and ensure that at-risk-species do not fall below levels that support population replacement or growth
- Outside of the context of population assessments or fishery evaluations under the ESA or MMPA, listing catch of individuals by number does not indicate whether take levels pose a risk to the populations

Re: Fishery Management Goal #2

There are two ways to reduce bycatch:

1. Reduce interactions with non-target/unmarketable species
2. Develop a market for non-target/unmarketable species

   Recently, Mr. Dave Rudie on behalf of Catalina Offshore Products received word that they have been awarded Saltonstall-Kennedy funds for their project titled: A Culinary Engineering Approach to Increasing the Value of Local Fisheries: Reducing Fish Discards at Sea and Promoting Full Utilization.

   This project will explore the marketability of species that are currently discarded such as the common mola mola, a species which currently represents the vast majority of discards.

Re: Fishery Management Goal #3

- In the California commercial swordfish fishery, participation has declined in recent decades, resulting in decreased domestic swordfish catch and an increased reliance on imported swordfish from countries with relatively higher bycatch rates
- Recent assessments of swordfish stock status in the northeast Pacific indicate the population is healthy and fished at a level that is below maximum sustainable yield (MSY)
- Of all the major swordfish fishing areas in close proximity to the United States, only the West Coast lacks a commercially viable swordfish fishery operating at or near MSY levels

Re: Fishery Management Goal #4

- Globally, the majority of swordfish are taken in longline fisheries where they are mostly targeted at night in surface waters
- During the 1990s and early 2000s there were a number of regulatory changes including closures imposed on U.S. longline fisheries due to concerns about bycatch. As a result, the U.S. conducted experiments with commercial fishers in the Atlantic to test gear modifications aimed at reducing bycatch
- The most effective changes included switching from J-hooks to circle hooks and using finfish or a mackerel-type bait rather than squid. In the Central Pacific, the same gear and bait modifications were introduced in 2004 in the Hawaii shallow-set longline swordfish fishery. As a result, capture rates of leatherback and loggerhead turtles declined by 83% and 90%, respectively
- The effectiveness of the gear and bait modifications in reducing bycatch certainly contributed to the U.S. North Atlantic swordfish pelagic longline fishery obtaining the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification in 2011

Re: Fishery Management Goal #4

- In April of 2015, the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management concluded a yearlong thesis analysis titled “Evaluating Management Scenarios to Revitalize the California Commercial Swordfish Fishery.”
- The Abstract of the final Bren report states: “We modeled 252 management scenarios in the California commercial swordfish fishery, and revealed numerous options to increase the catch and profit in the fishery without exceeding the PFMC proposed bycatch hard cap levels… Our analysis demonstrated that reincorporating longline into the fishery could increase domestic swordfish catch and fleetwide profits without exceeding bycatch hard cap levels.”
- “Fisheries managers can use this model as a decision-making tool to consider management options to enhance productivity and conservation in the fishery and decrease reliance on imports with the goal of protecting sensitive species globally.”
- The Conclusion of the final Bren report states: “Overall, we recommend the Council consider a gear portfolio composed of a mixed-gear fleet of drift gillnet, longline, and harpoon as this results in the highest profit and catch outcomes and will provide a steady supply of domestically-caught, California swordfish throughout most of the year.”

We recommend the Council adopt a revised preliminary Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan for public review.

Pacific Seafood

THANK YOU