

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) discussed the Climate and Communities Initiative with several members of the Ecosystem Working Group (EWG) during the February 22, 2019, HMSMT webinar. During that discussion the EWG asked the HMSMT for input on a scenario planning topic related to highly migratory species (HMS) and future climate change. Following the EWG briefing on the topic, the HMSMT told the EWG members that we would follow up on a suggested scenario.

In line with the Summary of Scenario Planning Topic Ideas table in the EWG report on page 7, the HMSMT recommends the following:

HMS support numerous commercial fisheries along the West Coast, including hook-and-line, large-mesh drift gillnet, pelagic longline, harpoon, purse-seine and a newly developing deep-set buoy gear fishery. These species are also highly important to the recreational fishery in Southern California, and albacore is important to those in Oregon and Washington. HMS abundance and population distributions fluctuate with changes in ocean conditions and prey abundance. The scenarios in this topic would explore the management issues and economic effects of these shifting stock distributions on fishing communities. Among other things, the scenarios would help explore how future ocean conditions may affect regional issues such as port infrastructure needs, markets and impacts on fishing communities, as well as influence the allocation of quotas under international agreements.

To include in the Appendix of Topic Descriptions, the HMSMT recommends the following:

HMS are pelagic species that travel vast distances across the ocean and the boundaries between national and international management jurisdictions. Historically, the West Coast has relied heavily on these stocks for both commercial and recreational fishing opportunities. Their abundance is driven largely by variability in environmental conditions, with temperature playing a significant role. Additionally, distribution of protected species, such as whales and sea turtles, which occasionally interact with HMS fisheries, may also shift with changing oceanic conditions. The commercial fisheries for HMS stocks are regulated by closures, catch limits, and other management measures in the state, Federal and international arenas. In California, HMS fishermen are seasonally dependent on the availability of a portfolio of species, often shifting target between HMS depending on availability, proximity, and potential revenue; however, fishermen that fish for HMS off of Oregon and Washington nearly exclusively fish for albacore during [the months of June through October](#).

As a result of their large size and specific processing needs, these fisheries are also dependent on sufficient shoreside port infrastructure to process a fresh, high quality product. Recent changes in environmental conditions affecting the abundance and distribution of HMS species along the coast has created opportunities for recreational and commercial components of the fishery by bringing more southerly distributed species

north. However, a northward shift in distribution may result in fishermen having to travel farther to sell their catch, as adequate port infrastructure for the processing of these species may not exist to the necessary extent in more northern areas. Additionally, communities that are traditionally reliant on revenues generated by HMS landings as a source of employment and income may be adversely affected by species movements which significantly alter the locations where HMS are landed.

PFMC  
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