

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON DRIFT GILLNET
PERFORMANCE METRICS REVIEW

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) reviewed Agenda Item J.4, Drift Gillnet Performance Metrics Review and offers the following comments. In spite of recent legislation, we believe the Council is the best venue for managing this Federal fishery as mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Act. We are pleased to see the Council's continued management of this fishery, and appreciate the Highly Migratory Species Management Team's (HMSMT) analysis of bycatch performance metrics.

Because of numerous regulatory actions over the years, the drift gillnet fleet has been primarily restricted to the Southern California Bight. The Bight is a highly unique area which is susceptible to varying water temperatures and chlorophyll abundance each year. This will impact the presence of different species in any one given year, thus making annual bycatch estimates less meaningful. Therefore, we recommend a multi-year approach as described in the HMSMT's report. The HMSAS believes that if a problem did arise relating to marine mammals, it should be taken up by the Take Reduction Team. If a problem arises with finfish or turtles, the HMSAS recommends that the Council consider organizing a team or work group that includes fishermen to discuss and recommend potential solutions. This could include temporary time and/or area closures, use of deeper net-extendors, and working more closely with Eco-Cast.

PFMC
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