

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT (EFP) PERFORMANCE, ISSUANCE, AND RENEWALS

Notice of EFP Issuance in 2019

On May 8, 2019, NMFS West Coast Region announced in the Federal Register ([84 FR 20108](#)) that it issued EFPs to target highly migratory species (HMS) in Federal waters off the U.S. West Coast during 2019. These EFPs include standard and linked configurations of deep-set buoy gear (DSBG), as well as pelagic longline gear. NMFS renewed 21 standard buoy gear (SBG) EFPs for 2019 (Table 1). Ten linked buoy gear (LBG) EFPs issued in 2018 remain valid for the 2019 calendar year (Table 2). NMFS also issued a new pelagic longline EFP for two vessels valid for 24 months from the effective date (Table 3).

EFP permits are issued as exemptions from specific prohibitions under the Fishery Management Plan for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP). The general purpose of EFPs is to allow novel fishing practices and gear types that are not otherwise authorized under a fishery management plan. Specifically, NMFS will collect data on the effects and efficacy of using these gears to fish for swordfish and other HMS off the West Coast.

Table 1. SBG EFPs renewed from 2018, and expiring on December 31, 2019.

Applicant/Captain	Vessel Name	Vessel ID	Application
Dan Fuller	Audax	CF8370FH	Fuller
William Sutton	Aurelia	597524	PIER
Scott Brenneman	Circle Hook	1286891	S. Brenneman
Jack Stephens	DEA	CF0012HY	Stephens
Ron Ellis	Defiance	40335	Ellis
Stephen Greyshock	Emma Ray	CF1878ZM	Greyshock
Tim Ferguson	Espada	624462	Ferguson
Michael Graves	Fishtail	1030136	Graves
Andrii Sidielnikov	Irbis	CF6266KM	Sidielnikov
John Ford	JB	550580	Ford
Matt White	Lil Jack	595177	White
Bob Ball	Pacific Sword	CF4430GJ	Ball
Kent Jacobs	Patricia J	585405	Jacobs
Fred Hepp	Plumeria	599359	Hepp
Raymond Kennedy	Rainman	1272816	Kennedy
Dustin Selck	Scorpio	918500	Selck
Anthony Makul	Spirit	611940	PIER
Andrew Rasmussen	Sundowner	628101	Rasmussen
David Hutto	Terlingin	1223771	Hutto
Ben Stephens	Tres Mujeres	1066033	Stephens

Table 2. LBG EFPs issued for 2018 - 2019, and expiring on December 31, 2019.

Applicant/Captain	Vessel Name	Vessel ID	Application
Nathan Perez, Thomas Carson	Bear Flag 2	558683	Perez Carson
John Foster	Chula	1217070	Foster
Steve Mintz	D J	550062	Mintz
David Haworth	Elizabeth H	644228	Haworth
Donald Krebs	Gold Coast	622026	PIER
John Hall	Kaylee H	536620	Hall
Lance Rienhardt	**Leah Gail	944172	PIER
David Haworth	Pacific Horizon	627203	Haworth
Arthur Lorton	Sea Haven	635102	Lorton
Kelly Fukushima	Three Boys	CF2036TJ	PIER

* LBG EFPs may fish a combination of LBG and SBG

** Recently re-assigned by PIER from the vessel Outer Banks

**Table 3. Longline EFPs signed on April 29, 2019,
and expiring 24 months from the effective date.**

Applicant/Captain	Vessel Name	Vessel ID	Application
David Haworth	Pacific Horizon	627203	Gibbs Haworth
John Gibbs	Southern Horizon	1052597	Gibbs Haworth

DSBG EFPs Active in 2018

EFP holders are expected to present a preliminary report on the results of the EFP to the HMSMT at the June Council meeting, per Council Operating Procedure 20 (i.e., Protocols for Consideration of EFPs for HMS Fisheries). From April through May 2019, NMFS received, and shared with Council staff, brief preliminary summary reports from DSBG EFP vessels active in 2018. The reports cover a range of topics including: gear performance, gear purchase investments, potential for gear conflicts, marketing and revenue issues, and other general issues encountered during EFP fishing. The goal of these preliminary reports is to highlight the experiences and takeaways of DSBG EFP fishing that are not captured by observer, logbook, or landings data.

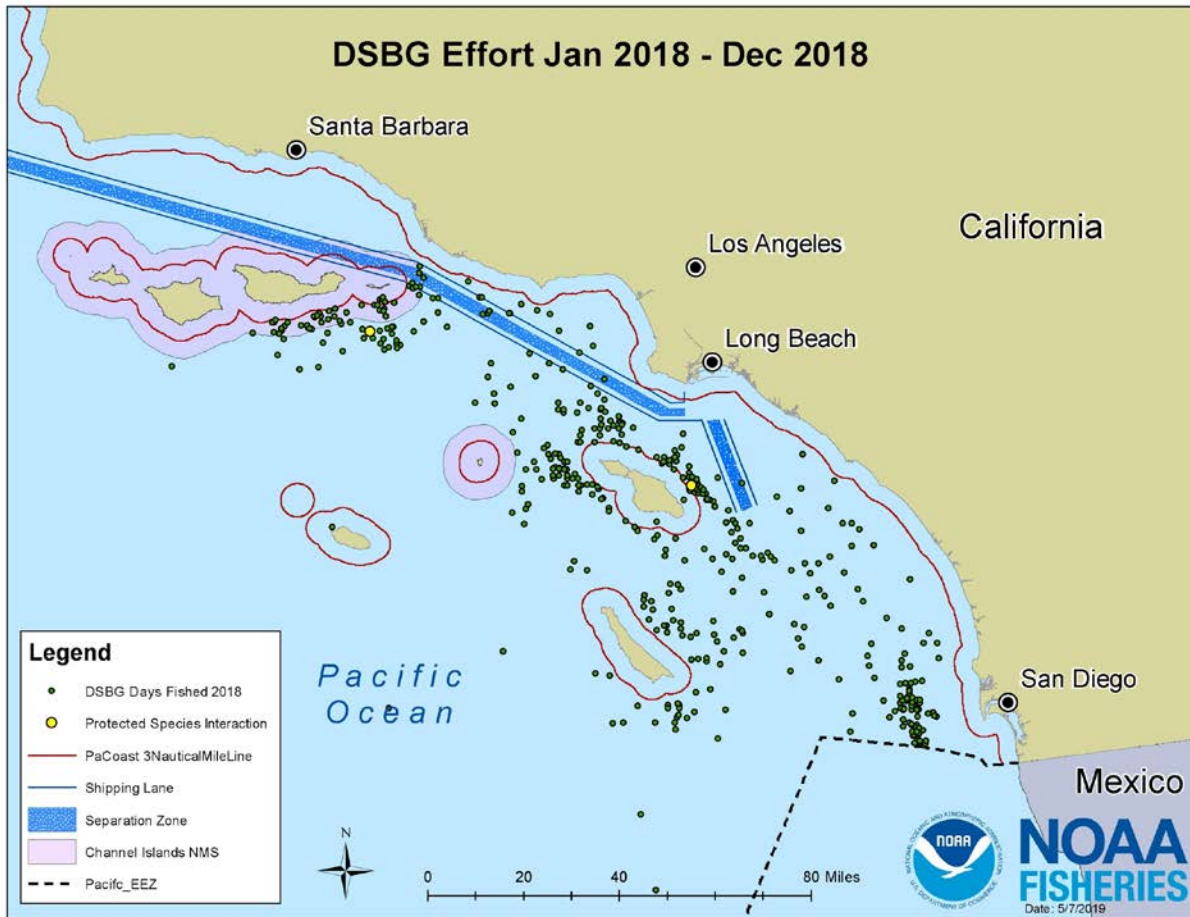
Additionally, NMFS has compiled and integrated a number of DSBG EFP data sources to prepare a summary of 2018 EFP activity, and to analyze the Council's alternatives for DSBG authorization under Agenda Item J.6, Deep-Set Buoy Gear Authorization Update and Review of Analysis. Data sources include observer data, and fisher logbooks for trips where an observer was not on board. Table 4 provides a summary of DSBG EFPs active in 2018 based on these data. Note that LBG EFP vessels are authorized to fish both SBG and LBG configurations in any combination within a single trip, up to a maximum of 10 buoys or 10 sections and no more than 30 hooks. Often, vessels holding LBG EFPs chose to only fish SBG during an entire trip. Highlighted fields for 2018 SBG EFP table fields indicate less than 100% observer coverage rates; thus, some data for these figures are self-reported through logbooks.

Table 4. Summary of catch data for EFP vessels active in 2018

2018 DSBG EFP Data Summary					
<u>Standard Deep-Set Buoy Gear (SBG)</u>		<u>Linked Deep-Set Buoy Gear (LBG)</u>			
# of Vessels	24	# of Vessels	5		
# of Days Fished	496	# of Days Fished	68		
Avg. Days Fished per Vessel	20.67	Avg. Days Fished per Vessel	13.60		
Overall Observer Coverage	58%	Overall Observer Coverage	100%		
Catch Composition		Catch Composition			
Swordfish	481	Swordfish	63		
Bigeye Thresher Shark	32	Bigeye Thresher Shark	2		
Pelagic Thresher Shark	2	Pelagic Thresher Shark	0		
Common Thresher Shark	1	Common Thresher Shark	0		
Shortfin Mako Shark	1	Shortfin Mako Shark	1		
Blue Shark	1	Blue Shark	2		
Escolar	2	Escolar	2		
Common Mola	1	Common Mola	0		
Northern Elephant Seal	1	Northern Elephant Seal	0		
Loggerhead Sea Turtle	1	Loggerhead Sea Turtle	0		
Swordfish	481	92.0%	Swordfish	63	90.0%
Bigeye Thresher Sharks	32	6.1%	Bigeye Thresher Sharks	2	2.9%
Other Sharks	5	1.0%	Other Sharks	3	4.3%
Other Finfish (Released)	3	0.6%	Other Finfish (Released)	2	2.9%
Northern Elephant Seal	1	0.2%	Protected Species	0	0.0%
Released Alive					
Loggerhead Sea Turtle	1	0.2%			
Released Alive					
(Entangled in surface gear)					
<i>*Highlighted fields are estimates based on partial observer coverage</i>		<i>*Note that three vessels fished both standard and linked gear over the course of the season</i>			

Figure 1 shows a map of DSBG EFP effort during 2018. Note that the positions indicated by each dot are averages of latitude/longitude position data for each set over the course of a fishing day. Some of the positions are derived from logbooks and were not verified by NMFS observers. Therefore, the positions of each dot are to be considered estimates of average positions per day, and not exact locations.

Figure 1. Map of average position data for DSBG EFP effort during 2018.



Potential Council Recommendation on Extending DSBG EFPs beyond 2019

In a [report for the March 2018 Council meeting](#), the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) suggested that the Council “schedule meeting time to consider recommendations to NMFS on the extension of currently issued EFPs that will expire at the end of 2019.” The HMSMT noted that the Council “could recommend extension of these EFPs until full DSBG authorization occurs, unless circumstances require the termination of a specific EFP or EFPs.” NMFS is prepared to extend active EFPs beyond 2019 consistent with Endangered Species Act coverage, if the Council makes this recommendation to NMFS.