

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

The Highly Migratory Species Advisor Subpanel (HMSAS) was briefed by Ms. Liz Hellmers on the morning of September 8th, 2020 concerning the most recent standard and linked deep-set buoy gear (DSBG/DSLBG) exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications. She expressed the Highly Migratory Species Management Team's (HMSMT) concerns about the lack of effort for existing permittees North of Point Conception and Enforcement Consultants' concerns with the proposed EFPs which contained a night-time fishing component.

The HMSAS has reviewed the new EFP applications and agrees with the concern expressed about that lack of DSBG EFP effort outside of the Southern California Bight. Our hope is that more data will be collected in regions where there has, thus far, been very little effort which was promised; but not delivered. The HMSAS wants to point out that special consideration, and possibly incentives, should be given to those EFPs who *will* fish North of Point Conception.

At the afternoon joint meeting of the HMSAS and HMSMT, there was considerable discussion surrounding the night fishing EFPs. The issue was whether to authorize more night fishing EFPs without more information on interactions with nontarget species and species of concern. The HMSAS acknowledges the current EFP holder allowed to fish at night has not yet had to submit any of the required annual reports, but anecdotal reports are that it has been successful in harvesting marketable species. The discussion centered on the inherent conflict between the need to gather more data versus the possibility of interactions with species of concern.

After deliberation, the HMSAS makes the following recommendations to the Council:

1. All of the EFPs should be approved and forwarded to National Marine Fisheries Service for authorization in the interest of gathering more data; and
2. Should the Council be concerned about the amount of EFP activity in the Southern California Bight, it should prioritize those EFPs which propose to fish outside of that area; and
3. Should the Council be concerned about the EFPs with a night fishing component, the Council might want to consider only authorizing night fishing to permittees with experience with daytime use of the gear.