

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON ESSENTIAL FISH
HABITAT (EFH) – FINAL REVIEW

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) received a presentation from Nicole Nasby-Lucas of the Southwest Fishery Science Center (SWFSC) on Wednesday, September 9th in a joint session with the HMS Management Team (HMSMT). Ms. Nasby-Lucas summarized a Literature Review for all managed species under the HMS Fishery Management Plan and EFH designations. We understand there is new information available for HMS EFH descriptions due to advances in electronic tagging of migratory species over the last 17 years, as well as important data on migration patterns, depth, temperature, and environmental preferences. Observer data sets synthesized through 2017 are also showing new information on species distributions. However, datasets utilized to formulate earlier EFH descriptions are no longer available. It would be helpful to identify those data gaps if this item is moved forward. We acknowledge and agree with the HMSMT Report 1 under this agenda item, which noted that the maps in the existing EFH description are out of date and should be updated with the latest mapping technology to better convey the EFH information.

The HMSAS believes there is enough new information to warrant an update to the EFH designations, and supports the Council moving forward to Phase II. We acknowledge this could affect workload for the HMSMT and SWFSC staff, and defer to their judgement on how and when to proceed with an update.

PFMC
09/11/20