HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR PERMIT CLARIFICATIONS

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) reviewed the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reports (i.e., H.4.a, Supplemental Reports 1 and 2), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife report (CDFW H.4.a, Supplemental Report 1) which addresses issues raised in these reports as well as the November 2020 NMFS report (Agenda Item I.1.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1).

The CDFW report’s definition of “exempted fishing permit (EFP) holder” with respect to Tiers 1 and 3 appears to be consistent with Option B in Supplemental NMFS Report 2. Under this option, the HMSMT interprets “EFP holder” to include:

1. Vessel operators listed on an EFP who conducted deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) fishing effort and individually completed the effort requirements;
2. EFP managers and/or EFP vessel owners who oversaw an EFP that collectively met the effort requirements, regardless of whether they were onboard (an) EFP vessel(s) while the qualifying DSBG effort occurred.

In a joint discussion, the HMSMT heard concerns raised by some Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel members about the permit surrender provisions related to large-mesh drift gillnet trade-in programs in the permit tiers. It would be beneficial for the Council to clarify the process for permit surrender, including when an individual is determined to have “surrendered” their permit.

PFMC
03/08/21