

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON DRIFT GILLNET  
FISHERY BYCATCH PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) offers the following comments on the Drift Gillnet Fishery Bycatch Performance Report. At the outset, we wish to call attention to the following passage from the [Supplemental NMFS Report 1](#),

“...the 2019/2020 summary indicates that approximately 27 percent of the estimated fishing effort was observed during that season, that 74 percent of the observed catch was kept, and that 80 percent of the returned catch was released alive. Most of the species observed caught were marketable; 19 percent of the observed catch consisted of species that are not marketed. Of non-marketable species caught during the 2019/2020 season, 72 percent were released alive.”

The [HMSMT Report 1](#) for this agenda item paints a similarly rosy picture with bycatch estimates being well below the Regression Tree Performance Metric for ALL species.

The information contained in those reports speak for itself. By any science-based metric, the fishery is performing well. The HMSAS wishes to remind the Council that drift gillnet is the only truly financially viable gear type which harvests swordfish and other marketable species in the Exclusive Economic Zone off the U.S. West Coast for the nation. It does so at a price point which is lower than other specialized gear types which allows a larger segment of the nation’s seafood consumers to have access to well-managed swordfish harvested by U.S. fishermen while at the same time being competitive with the costs of swordfish harvested by non-U.S. fishermen; potentially reducing our reliance on imported seafood.

PFMC  
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