

**HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON DRIFT GILLNET
 HARD CAPS – RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES**

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) wants to thank the HMS Management Team (HMSMT) for their effort in offering up a large range of alternatives.

The HMSAS proposes the following alternative, using Alternative 4 in exceedance levels as hard caps (see Agenda Item H.3.a, HMSMT Report 1):

- When an individual vessel has one observed serious injury / mortality interaction, that vessel would be subject to a 14-day closure.
- When an individual vessel hard cap is met for the same species by the same vessel, that vessel would stop fishing until the next fishing season starting May 1 and there would also be a 14-day closure for the entire fishery.
- Option 1: If a fleetwide hard cap is met during May 1-October 31 the fishery would close for 30 days; if any cap is met again between November 1-January 31, the fishery would close until May 1.
- Option 2: Fleetwide hard caps are based on a November 1-October 31 time period (i.e., counting of observed serious injuries/mortalities starts on November 1 and resets the following November 1). If a fleetwide cap is met, the fishery closes until November 1.

Hard caps based on exceedance levels as derived from Table 3 in HMSMT Report 1:

Species	Individual Vessel Cap	Fleetwide Cap
Fin whale	2	3
Humpback whale	2	3
Sperm whale	2	3
Leatherback sea turtle	2	3
Loggerhead sea turtle	2	3
Olive-Ridley sea turtle	2	3
Green sea turtle	2	3
Short-fin pilot whale C/O/W	3	5
Common bottlenose dolphin C/O/W Offshore stock	3	5

Basing the hard caps on the exceedance levels in the HMSMT report is in consideration of a potentially higher level of observer coverage in a much smaller fleet (six vessels actively participating). The HMSAS supports increasing observer coverage levels on the active fleet as long as it is cost neutral to fishery participants and hard cap levels increase in proportion to coverage levels.

The HMSAS recommends that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) revisit the hard cap levels if observer coverage increases significantly beyond 20 percent (status quo). If new stock assessments show increased abundance of hard cap species, that would also warrant revisiting the hard cup numbers, or an automatic increase procedure could be defined. Note that in the original 2015 Council action, the Council would revisit the caps once the observer coverage level exceeded 70 percent. In addition, the Council could consider increasing access to the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area when observer coverage is above this level.

PFMC
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