

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL
REPORT ON COUNCIL MEETING AND PROCESS EFFICIENCIES

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) received an update from Dr. Kit Dahl regarding the staff white paper on Council Efficiencies and Effectiveness (Agenda Item C.3, Attachment 1). This resulted in a spirited conversation about a number of topics raised in the white paper. The HMSAS appreciates staff's efforts in drafting and presenting this white paper and generally supports the identified issues and provides a good starting point to consider the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council process. We do offer one editorial suggestion, replace the word "exploiting" on page 5 with "utilizing."

Council and Advisory Body Meetings

The overarching sentiment within the HMSAS is that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." We fully agree the focus here should be on maintaining and enhancing the Council's capacity to run effective and efficient meetings that lead to good decision-making with a complete record of those decisions. We firmly believe an in-person Advisory Body (AB) component is necessary to foster this. As technology improves, there may be increased opportunities for meaningful virtual participation for those unable to physically attend a meeting.

The HMSAS held a virtual meeting on August 31 and we appreciated the opportunity to convene beforehand to get brief introductions to some of the topics we were going to address while in Boise. One limiting factor was the inability to review all of the documents currently in front of us.

If the Council wishes to consider topic-specific meetings, we remind you of the importance of the Regional Fishery Management Organizations to our fisheries. Using recent history as a guide:

- Your June meeting allows for discussions and Council recommendations on the Pacific Bluefin Tuna Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission/Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee Joint Working Group and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.
- The September meeting – for the Northern Committee.
- The November meeting for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission meeting.

Given the importance of the Regional Fishery Management Organization meetings to our domestic fisheries, we encourage maintaining HMS presence at those meetings.

We support a strategic planning exercise, but believe such an exercise would benefit from AB participation as well.

We do think there are ways to improve our usefulness to the Council in its decision-making process. A couple of examples are provided below:

- We note the number of topics the ABs cover, and the limited amounts of time available to discuss these items and then prepare, edit and submit written reports. Perhaps the Situation Summaries could be presented in a way that ask questions of the ABs.
- There is a perception, right or wrong, that by the time an item is on the Council floor, decisions have already been made, or at least there is a feeling of where a decision is headed. We understand that discussions between Council members are necessary to streamline the Council process; but should those conversations benefit from AB expertise, that expertise should be sought. Perhaps fishery-specific pre-meetings could be held where the ABs etc. could hear the Council’s tentative position and our comments could address questions raised. Perhaps another option would be that the ABs are invited to comment on proposed motions after they are made. The New England Fishery Management Council provides public comment opportunities may “occur after the Council has discussed the items under consideration and/or once motions have been made and are under consideration.” See [New England Fishery Management Council Guidelines for Providing Public Comments](#).

We understand this is the first step in working to enhance the Council decision-making process and we look forward to future opportunities to comment on this important topic.

PFMC
09/11/22