

SWORDFISH FISHERY MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP - SCOPING

In September 2022, the Council discussed the goals and actions described in the draft Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan (SMMP) ([Agenda Item I.5, Attachment 1](#)). Three of the five categories of actions identified in the Plan relate to the California large-mesh drift gillnet fishery. Passage of the Drift Gillnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act mandates the end of the fishery by 2027. In that context, most if not all of the actions in those categories are no longer relevant. A fourth category of actions relates to authorization of deep-set buoy gear and related management measures. Those actions were completed when Federal regulations for the fishery became effective on June 7, 2023 ([88 FR 29545](#)). The fifth category of actions focuses on authorizing shallow-set longline gear to target swordfish. However, to date the Council has shown little interest in moving forward with permitting this gear type under its Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (HMS FMP). The Council last revisited this issue in [November 2019](#), deciding not to move forward with action to authorize the gear.

While the Council declined to finalize the SMMP, it had an expansive discussion, out of which emerged the idea of organizing a workshop that would focus on swordfish management issues in the context of the SMMP. Such a workshop could provide a more informal format to discuss swordfish management issues, with outcomes brought back to the Council to frame potential future actions. During its discussion the Council mentioned developing a more strategic approach to the use of exempted fishing permits to explore the feasibility of alternative, low bycatch gear types for targeting swordfish and, more broadly, a revisit of the SMMP goals to assess their continued relevance and relationship to the HMS FMP. Given that the actions identified in the SMMP may no longer be relevant, such a workshop could also explore other actions consistent with Council goals for managing the fishery.

The Council tasked its Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Team (HMSMT) with identifying potential workshop topics, taking into account the ideas brought up in Council discussion in September 2022. This meeting is the first opportunity the Council has had to revisit the workshop concept and provide further guidance necessary to begin organizing such an effort. During its May 1-2, 2023, meeting, the HMSMT responded to the Council task, focusing on identifying potential workshop topics and raising questions the Council will need to answer if such a workshop is to be organized (Agenda Item J.5.a, HMSMT Report 1).

Council Action:

Identify Issues to be Addressed and Provide Guidance on Process and Timeline.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.5.a, HMSMT Report 1.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- J.5 Swordfish Fishery Management Workshop Scoping Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Identify Issues to be Addressed and Provide Guidance on Process and Timeline

PFMC
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