

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE NATIONAL  
 MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

The Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan and regulations give National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) the discretion to place observers on vessels to monitor bycatch and for other purposes. We note that NMFS is notifying participants in the limited entry deep-set buoy gear (DSBG) fishery in the Southern California Bight (Bight) of a 48-hour pre-trip notification requirement. This notification is to accommodate the possibility of observer placement. This fishery was developed and extensively tested under exempted fishing permits for many years. Through that process it has been demonstrated the fishery has virtually no bycatch or other adverse impacts on marine resources. We note that vessels participating in other HMS fisheries with low/no bycatch, do not carry observers and are not subject to a pre-trip notification requirement. The HMSAS does not see a continuing need for observer placement **in the limited entry DSBG fishery and therefore requests NMFS lift the pre-trip notification requirement for this fishery.** Observer placement on vessels and effort outside of the Bight should be prioritized to allow for collection of additional data on the performance of the DSBG fishery in areas where the fishery has not been operational.

The HMSAS notes the falling Catch Per Unit of Effort (CPUE) for DSBG harvested swordfish.

Year	Days	SFO caught	CPUE
2015	132	136	1.03030303
2016	283	474	1.674911661
2017	324	552	1.703703704
2018	582	604	1.037800687
2019	714	1063	1.488795518
2020	1067	1255	1.176194939
2021	667	447	0.670164918
2022	411	211	0.513381995

The HMSAS representative who has participated in the DSBG fishery since 2015 reports this season is very slow as well. At roughly one-half of a fish per day, this is not an economically viable fishery and the HMSAS remains concerned about the inability of west coast harvesters to access an underutilized resource.