

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (HMS) ACTIVITIES

HMS Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

NMFS published a Federal Register Notice announcing receipt of, and soliciting public comment on, HMS EFP applications and Council recommendations on these applications in 2022 and 2023 on October 5, 2023 ([88 FR 69143](#)). These applications include requests to fish in federal waters using a range of fishing practices including, modified standard and linked daytime deep-set buoy gear (DSBG), night-set buoy gear, and extended linked buoy gear. Comments will be accepted through November 2, 2023.

- To comment electronically: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and enter NOAA-NMFS-2023-0116 in the Search box. Click on the “Comment” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- To comment by mail: Submit written comments to Chris Fanning, NMFS West Coast Region, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802. Include the identifier “NOAA-NMFS-2023-0116” in your letter.

Drift Gillnet (DGN) EFP

On August 29, 2023, NMFS denied issuance of an [EFP application](#) the Council recommended for approval in March 2015. This application proposed use of dynamic ocean modeling tools for bycatch mitigation when fishing DGN in side-by-side sea trials with shallow set longline gear in the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area. NMFS delayed review of this application while the dynamic ocean modeling tools were in development, and ultimately denied this application as incongruent with the recently enacted Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act, and consistent with regulations at 50 CFR 600.745(b)(3)(iii).

Pacific Bluefin Tuna In-Season Action

NMFS published a Federal Register Notice announcing the 2023-2024 biennial catch limit for commercial Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) on October 5, 2023 ([88 FR 69098](#)). The 2023-2024 biennial limit is 1,054 metric tons (mt). This includes a carry-over of 37 mt in under-harvest from the 2021-2022 biennial management period, in accordance with IATTC Resolution C-21-05. During the 2023-2024 biennial management period, the one-year maximum of 720 mt remains unchanged as a result of this announcement; in other words, for 2023, the catch limit is 720 mt.