

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON HMS ROADMAP WORKSHOP PLANNING

During our joint meeting in September 2023, the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) and Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) discussed the logistical components of an HMS Roadmap workshop, such as timing, structure, participation, goals, and agenda. This discussion was continued during our November 2023 joint meeting.

HMSMT Report 1 ([Agenda Item F.3.a](#)) aimed to:

- incorporate input from all participants, including both industry and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), on revision of the goals from the Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan (SMMP),
- document how ideas for potential actions and sub-actions of the HMS Roadmap relate to the latest draft of the SMMP and to the revised goals, and
- consider which action items could benefit from more discussion in a workshop setting.

This supplemental report summarizes the November 2023 meeting discussion and provides additional items for Council consideration including workshop logistics, objectives, and a proposed agenda.

### **HMS Roadmap Goals**

The HMSMT reviewed the Supplemental California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Report 1 and would like to clarify the process behind goal development. As described in the HMSMT Report 1 ([Agenda Item F.3.a](#)), the HMS advisory bodies (ABs) used the SMMP goals as a foundation and dedicated substantial time and attention to drafting the proposed goals for the HMS Roadmap to ensure that they captured the Council's written guidance from the June 2023 meeting. The ABs also jointly discussed and drafted a range of potential actions and sub-actions for inclusion in the HMS Roadmap to meet those goals.

The HMSMT considered the edits provided by CDFW to clarify the HMS Roadmap goals proposed in HMSMT Report 1. The team feels that these edits result in the loss of the underlying context and intent of the goals drafted by the ABs. Therefore, the HMSMT recommends the Council adopt the goals as written in HMSMT Report 1 and consider any clarifying edits as an agenda item for a workshop. The HMSMT provides additional insight into the rationale for this recommendation in an addendum to this report.

### **Workshop Funding and Timing Proposals**

The HMSMT and HMSAS discussed different proposals for the timing of a workshop. These proposals included a workshop being held in conjunction with a Council meeting, or as a

standalone workshop held outside the Council meeting schedule. Funding for a workshop was a key consideration in these discussions. The Council will be considering this workshop for Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding in the list of proposals in C.4, Attachment 1. The HMSMT endorses this proposal.

If the Council prefers to hold a workshop in conjunction with a Council meeting, the ABs recommend scheduling it in the days immediately preceding the June 2024 meeting, located in San Diego, to promote industry participation. This approach could minimize costs to the Council by reducing the required travel for Council-sponsored participants and reduce travel and time commitment for AB members.

Should a workshop outside the Council meeting schedule be deemed more appropriate, the HMSAS suggested that holding the workshop in Southern California in winter or early spring of 2024 will promote industry participation by taking into account HMS fishery seasons. We understand, however, that this short turnaround time may not be feasible. The timing of a workshop in early spring 2024 may also not be consistent with the timing of the distribution of the IRA funding and therefore could require Council designating another funding source.

### **Workshop Structure**

During the joint session, the HMSMT and HMSAS discussed the structure of a workshop including meeting format, participation, and the need for facilitation. Both the benefits and limitations of different meeting formats were discussed. The ABs suggest that this workshop be in-person, but structured to allow for remote viewing and public comment.

There was a lengthy discussion on potential options for participation. It was unclear to AB members whether the Council anticipates Council members participating in the workshop, or if the intent is for the ABs and public to engage and bring information back to the Council for consideration. Clarification on this matter would better allow for planning.

The HMSAS expressed the need for more input from current swordfish and HMS fishery participants as well as industry members with a diversity of experience. Sending invitations, in addition to issuing a public notice, could diversify participation from stakeholders.

There was additional dialogue on the need for outside facilitation of a workshop. The ABs would prioritize the following roles for a facilitation service:

- Promote participant engagement through the development of and adherence to workshop ground rules such as comment time limits and managing speaking order and decorum.
- Maintain agenda topic time limits.
- Facilitate and document the discussion to allow all participants to contribute to the discussion.

After more detailed discussion the HMSMT agreed that an objective facilitator who is currently outside the HMS Council process would be beneficial to:

- promote an inclusive workshop environment,

- navigate potentially contentious issues or conflicting views, and
- ensure participants adhere to workshop structure and ground rules.

## Workshop Objectives and Agenda

In our discussions, the ABs reached a consensus view that a key component to achieving the draft HMS Roadmap goals is the development of a more streamlined exempted fishing permit (EFP) process. Given the scope of this task, the ABs agree that this topic should be the focus of the upcoming workshop, and recognize that other topics may be addressed through the traditional Council process and joint AB sessions. In summary, this workshop would serve to:

- develop a streamlined and flexible EFP strategy to support innovation in fishing practices for HMS fisheries
- determine how the strategy relates to the timeline in the Driftnet Act for transitioning to alternative fishing practices that target swordfish and other HMS
- clarify definitions for key components or terms in a streamlined EFP strategy

Despite the suggested emphasis on EFPs at the workshop, the HMSMT suggests the Council leave flexibility in the HMS Roadmap document's structure to allow for consideration of all relevant actions and sub-actions, and prioritize among them on an ongoing basis.

The HMSMT and HMSAS developed the following agenda items for Council consideration. The amount of detail included is to capture the breadth of discussion topics, and once a facilitator can be identified this agenda could be further refined.

### Draft Agenda:

1. Ground rules, speaking/commenting procedure, time limits, etc.
2. Adopt agenda
3. Discussion of scope of HMS Roadmap document
4. Review draft HMS Roadmap goals
5. Adopt definition of terms for Council consideration/approval (i.e., appendix)
6. Development of an EFP Streamlining Strategy
  - a. Transition to alternative fishing practices under the Driftnet Act
  - b. Funding avenues
  - c. Timing (EFP process, National Marine Fisheries Service regulatory process, gear authorization)
  - d. Economic viability
  - e. Climate-ready fisheries preparedness (management flexibility and fishery resiliency)
  - f. Application process
  - g. Performance standards
    - i. Catch (Optimum Yield)
    - ii. Bycatch
    - iii. Economic considerations
  - h. Results evaluation (e.g., types and amount of data collected, etc.)

## **Recommendations**

The HMSMT recommends that the Council:

1. Adopt as draft the proposed HMS Roadmap goals as written in the HMSMT Report 1.
2. Clarify Council members' intent to participate in the workshop.
3. Identify the funding and timing for the workshop.
4. Provide guidance on the draft workshop agenda.
5. Discuss expectations for workshop outcomes.

## **Addendum: HMSMT Goal Rationale**

Following input from the Council indicating that the original goals of the SMMP had value, the ABs focused on revisions to those original SMMP goals. The two main concerns the HMSMT has with the CDFW proposed edits are for goals C and D.

Goal C originated from the third goal of the original SMMP and highlighted the importance of promoting economic viability for HMS fisheries. While the phrasing of the second half of the revised goal in the HMSMT's report as drafted may be somewhat unclear, there was substantial discussion in the joint session with the HMSAS on the linkage between economic viability and historical and future fishery participation. The CDFW edits lessen the importance of economic viability and simultaneously loses the intent of the original SMMP goal and the intent of the revised version. The HMSAS conveyed its desire to not only preserve opportunity for traditional participants in HMS fisheries, but also to promote the recruitment and diversification of future participants through innovation to develop economically viable fishing methods. Fishing methods which are not economically viable are unlikely to flourish. This could result in wasted investment and failure to provide a means to harvest swordfish and other HMS at potential volumes of commercial production.

Goal D intentionally used the term "climate- ready HMS fisheries" to signify a primary focus on HMS fishery operations among fishing communities in support of these operations. The HMSMT is concerned that the language proposed by CDFW dilutes the focus on climate-readiness of HMS fishing operations.

PFMC  
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