

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND PRIORITIES

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) reviewed and discussed the Executive Director’s Recommendations for Organizational and Process Refinements ([Attachment 1](#)), and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Staff Report on Agenda Topic Prioritization Methods ([Attachment 2](#)). The HMSMT supports the following:

1. Proposal A.1 to reduce the Council meetings that take up HMS related items to three per year, acknowledging that additional meetings may be needed in some years to satisfy management requirements.
 - The HMSMT generally supports this approach but cautions that it reduces meeting time to the minimum requirement for a “full rulemaking process.”
 - To avoid the need for a fishery management plan (FMP) amendment, we recommend dropping the September meeting in odd years to achieve a regular cadence of meetings among HMS advisory bodies (ABs). However, during even years, we recommend dropping the June meeting as to maintain the existing schedule in the HMS FMP for the biennial management cycle.
 - The HMSMT supports a virtual team meeting format for no more than one meeting per year. We recommend prioritizing meeting in person when final actions are scheduled.
2. Instead of creating a cross-FMP AB as proposed in A.3.1, Council staff could host webinars on cross-FMP agenda items to allow broad AB input, which could be included in a single report to the Council.
 - The HMSMT understands that the intent of creating a working group for cross-FMP agenda items is an attempt to reduce the time needed for redundant AB discussion and reports. The HMSMT supports the alternative approach described in the Ecosystem Workgroup Supplemental Report 1 ([C.2.b, Supplemental EWG Report 1](#)). This would allow for multiple AB members to attend and provide input while meeting the objectives of reducing report redundancy.
3. Revision of guidance on AB report format, length, and need to read reports into the record (A.3.2).
 - While time used to read reports in full on the Council floor needs to be greatly reduced, the HMSMT is concerned that limiting ABs to only two pages for the main body of their reports will reduce the quality of information and increase the time it takes ABs to come to consensus on report content. The HMSMT feels that the Advanced Briefing Book reports should not be restricted to this length as there will be ample time for the Council to review prior to floor discussion.
4. Scheduling of AB meetings to either allow for AB members to be present on the floor for discussion, or a travel day in-between, to allow for them to participate in Council discussion remotely (A.3.2).
 - When AB members are unable to be present for Council discussion (either virtually or in person) due to travel or overlapping AB meetings, it can limit their understanding of the Council’s discussion and outcomes. It is valuable for the HMSMT to maintain continuity of participation across subsequent Council meetings, especially for issues requiring multiple floor discussions. Additionally, agency representatives on the ABs often provide valuable support for their

respective Council members during floor discussions, and limiting this collaboration will likely hinder the efficiency of Council discussion.

5. Incorporation of outcomes of the HMS Roadmap workshop when determining how to schedule future agenda items on exempted fishing permits (EFPs).
 - The HMS Roadmap workshop was held just prior to the June Council meeting and included extensive discussion of the EFP process. The workshop summary will be available at the September Council meeting.
6. Exploration into how proposal A.3.3 to take up workload planning as an agenda item twice per year would function.
7. As long as National Marine Fisheries Service representation continues as the Council's conduit in international forums, the HMSMT supports the elimination of Council funding for staff and contractor participation (A.4).

If the Council chooses to move forward with a prioritization process for agenda items, then the HMSMT will provide additional recommendations in relation to HMS topics.

PFMC
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