

PROPOSED AD HOC COMMITTEE - HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ROADMAP WORKGROUP

Background

In June 2024, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) hosted a workshop to develop ideas for creating and refining gear types to help sustain and grow the highly migratory species (HMS) fishery, while minimizing bycatch in the fishery. One focus of the workshop was on the Council's process and the speed at which decisions are made related to gear type development — in particular, the Council's process around exempted fishing permits (EFPs). A report of that workshop was adopted at the Council's November 2024 meeting. It is envisioned that a roadmap for the fishery would build from this workshop, with a draft roadmap document being made available at the March 2025 Council meeting. It is envisioned that this roadmap would include a framework to assist in accomplishing the goals of expanding HMS opportunities, minimizing bycatch, and creating and refining gear types through the Council's EFP process. This initiative is aligned with Inflation Reduction Act [Project #3](#): Developing Climate-Ready Fishing Methods that Mitigate the Bycatch of Non-Target, Associated Species in a Changing Ecosystem.

Proposed Charge

The proposed Ad Hoc Committee (or "Workgroup") is charged with developing a draft HMS Roadmap for Council consideration. The Workgroup will focus on the key roadmap provisions and actions to support its implementation. This includes, inter alia, a Council framework for HMS EFPs, provisions that support IRA Project #3, and other items contained in the Roadmap Workshop report and/or related advisory body and management entity reports, as appropriate. The Workgroup will also provide advice related to the implementation of those provisions and will report regularly to the Council on progress. This could also include consideration of how the Roadmap could align with or utilize the HMS pilot program in the National Seafood Strategy.

The workgroup will also consider developing and refining Council procedures (COPs, EFP guidance, etc.) which help facilitate the more rapid creation of new gears. Those gears should focus on achieving the goals of the HMS Roadmap.

This could include:

- Modification of the Council Operating Procedure 20 (HMS EFP process)
- Improvement of EFP guidance
- Development of EFP performance goals, including acceptable bycatch, and metrics to evaluate EFP performance

Membership

This proposed Ad Hoc Committee would be limited in size, and all members would be expected to assist in drafting recommendations, assessing the effects of different policy approaches, and engaging in dialog with stakeholders that are not members of the workgroup. The Workgroup would be staffed by one or two Council staff. Members are appointed by Council Chair, considering input from the Council and ABs, and appointments can be made after the November meeting adjourns. The Workgroup would typically meet online, separate from regular Council meetings.

The Workgroup would be composed of two HMSMT members, three HMSAS members, a NMFS WCR representative, and two Council members.

PFMC
11/18/2024