

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON 2025-26
HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES - FINAL

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) discussed the stock status updates and potential changes to the 10-fish limit on incidental catch of HMS by the California small-mesh drift gillnet (SMDGN) fishery. The HMSMT recommends:

- The Council approve the use of the reference points proposed by National Marine Fisheries Service and reviewed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee as suitable for determining the status of the shortfin mako, and
- Maintain status quo on the incidental catch limit of HMS in the SMDGN fishery.

During the September 2024 meeting, the Council questioned whether the allowed retention of up to 10 incidentally caught HMS in the SMDGN fishery is resulting in regulatory discards of the rebuilt Pacific bluefin (PBF) stock. The Council considered whether the limits should be revised in a way that could mitigate regulatory discards while deterring the targeting of HMS by this fishery. The HMSMT discussed several options, including increasing the incidental catch retention limit to 20 or 50 fish, or introducing species-specific limits.

The available information, including California Department of Fish and Wildlife gill net logbooks and commercial landings data, do not indicate regulatory discards of PBF in this fishery. There have been few PBF landings by the SMDGN fishery in the last five years, with the majority of recorded weights indicating 1-2 fish per landing. Given the limited information, the HMSMT supports the status quo at this time.

PFMC
11/14/24