

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON HMS ROADMAP WORKSHOP REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) addressed Council actions 1, 3 and 4 as listed in the Situation Summary for this agenda item, in the HMSMT [H.4.a Supplemental Report 1](#). For the two remaining actions, the HMSMT recommends the Council:

- 1) Support the proposed timeline for refining the HMS Roadmap in view of the Council's expressed desire to prioritize activities under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Project 3.
- 2) Support the proposed approach to refining the content of the HMS Roadmap.

Timeline:

Given the current timeline for the IRA projects and the connection between IRA Project 3 and the HMS Roadmap, the HMSMT sees value in having the broader HMS Roadmap adopted before prioritizing actions within it. We understand from Council discussions of the IRA-funded projects that the Council has set priorities for HMS management considerations. Therefore, the HMSMT recommends that the HMS Roadmap be developed as soon as possible to make sure that IRA Project 3 moves forward in alignment within the broader context of future management considerations for fisheries under the HMS FMP.

Refining and Completing an HMS Roadmap:

Apart from development of an exempted fishing permit (EFP) framework (as discussed in [Supplemental HMSMT Report 1](#)), there are additional considerations in need of Council guidance to complete the HMS Roadmap, namely refining of Actions and Council priorities into an organized document. Using the [Swordfish Monitoring and Management Plan \(SMMP\)](#) as a template, the HMSMT suggests the following outline be considered:

I. Introduction

Use the SMMP introduction as a starting point since the HMS Roadmap is meant to replace the SMMP.

II. Purpose of the Roadmap (goals)

The Council adopted the HMS Roadmap goals in March of 2024, which would be archived in the Roadmap. These are:

- A. Support innovation and development of multi-species HMS fishing methods to increase the domestic supply of and meet the demand for swordfish and other marketable species.
- B. Support and test fishing practices that have the potential to be economically viable and consistent with national standard 9 guidelines.
- C. Support the economic viability of West Coast commercial fisheries for swordfish and associated marketable species through a diverse range of HMS fishing methods.

- D. Promote Climate-Ready Fisheries and fisheries resilience by developing flexibility in management and other tools to account for changes in HMS distributions, ecosystems structure and function, and the communities dependent on HMS fisheries.
- E. Engage fishery participants to preserve knowledge and help bolster resilience in future fisheries.
- F. Support recreational HMS fishing opportunities.

III. Actions

Based on discussions with the HMSAS, the HMSMT provided draft action items for Council consideration (see November 2023 [F.3.a HMSMT Report 1](#) and March 2024 [I.3a HMSMT Report 1](#)). The actions listed in these reports are meant to describe future actions the Council may take to support the HMS Roadmap goals. While the reports grouped the action items either under goals they supported or by topic, they did not address how some might be better qualified as supporting steps or sub-actions. The HMSMT proposes to bring forward a revised list of actions based on review of the HMS Roadmap Workshop notes, joint sessions, public comment, and Council guidance.

The HMSMT reviewed the current list of proposed actions and sub-actions for the HMS Roadmap that were presented to the Council in March 2024. The HMSMT discussed the need to provide additional clarity on the following items mentioned in the CDFW report under this agenda item ([H.4.a Supplemental CDFW Report 1](#)). These include:

2c: Evaluate bycatch levels relative to a multispecies index of harvest in the context of population levels, economic impacts, fleets, and fishing effort levels including comparisons with importing HMS caught by foreign fleets.

4c: Identify ways to mitigate negative impacts on conservation by reducing the [seafood] trade deficit.

6f: Development of economic index for multispecies fishery production, as a metric for comparing multispecies swordfish harvest methods.

We understand that those listed above are not Council actions but instead are supporting steps or sub-actions that may need to be completed in order for the Council to address the proposed actions, such as those related to developing performance metrics for EFPs. Additional rationale and details on what could be considered in the above mentioned actions are included for reference in Appendix 1 of this report.

IV. Council Priorities

The HMSMT proposes a section of the HMS Roadmap that includes a description of the actions that the Council has prioritized. As a first step, the HMSMT would identify how the IRA Project 3 actions (i.e., EFP Framework and Dynamic Ocean Modeling) relate to actions and goals in the draft HMS Roadmap. This section would also indicate future priorities to take up when directed by the Council.

Next Steps

Prior to the March 2025 Council meeting, the HMSMT proposes to hold a joint webinar session with the HMSAS to produce a working draft of the HMS Roadmap with the intention of submitting this draft document for the advanced briefing book.

The HMSMT also plans to attend the IRA Project 3 initial workshop webinar on December 17, 2024, to ensure continuity is maintained between that project and the overarching HMS Roadmap document.

Appendix 1: Rationale for Items 2c, 4c, and 6f

HMS fishing methods must be economically viable while meeting U.S. conservation standards. Regarding swordfish for example, new approaches should improve on the bycatch performance of foreign fisheries that currently supply the majority share of swordfish to the U.S. market. Methods with lower bycatch for the same amount of marketable species catch as foreign suppliers have the potential to meet U.S. West Coast swordfish demand with improved bycatch performance.

Developing an economic index¹ for multispecies fishery production, as a metric for comparing single and multispecies HMS harvest methods (6f), is a necessary step to facilitate this comparison between methods with different marketable species catch compositions. Evaluating bycatch levels relative to this multispecies index (2c) would help to identify methods to satisfy the U.S. West Coast market demand for swordfish and other marketable species with lower bycatch, in line with Council goals. Comparison of conservation impacts of the fisheries which supply U.S. West Coast markets require identification of all sources of swordfish supplied to the U.S. West Coast. This exercise offers the potential to reduce the conservation impact of the U.S. West Coast swordfish consumption through increased U.S. West Coast swordfish production.

Decreasing the seafood trade deficit by increasing U.S. West Coast swordfish production (4c) could offer increased opportunities for employment in the U.S. swordfish processing and fishing sector, while reducing global conservation impacts. A likely result would be increased benefits to U.S. consumers, producers, and communities dependent on commercial fishing activities, plus an improvement in U.S. food security due to reduced reliance on import sources to meet U.S. consumption demand. Metrics for consumer and producer surplus in the U.S. West Coast swordfish sector would be useful to quantify such benefits.

PFMC
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¹ A “multispecies index” is an economically rigorous metric for catch production which supports comparisons between fishing methods with potentially different catch compositions.