

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ROADMAP DEVELOPMENT

The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Roadmap has been in development since June 2023, replacing the draft Swordfish Monitoring and Management Plan. Since then, there has been a substantial amount of work completed and decisions made related to the Roadmap. Recent milestones in development of the Roadmap include:

- March 2024: The Council adopted a set of goals for the Roadmap (see Appendix 1 of F.4.a, FIW Report 1).
- June 2024: The Council held an HMS Roadmap Workshop in San Diego, California.
- November 2024: The Council adopted the June [workshop report](#), considered recommendations from the HMS Management Team (HMSMT) and the HMS Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS), and agreed to form an ad hoc committee to further work on the HMS Roadmap. The Ad Hoc Fisheries Innovation Workgroup (FIW) was formed under November [Agenda Item C.5](#).
- March 2025: The Council considered the draft Roadmap developed by the HMSMT and tasked the FIW with coordinating future updates to the Roadmap, including any proposed modifications.

At the June 2025 meeting, the Council should consider several issues related to the Roadmap, HMS exempted fishing permits (EFP), and future workload and priorities for the FIW, and should provide guidance on next steps.

Roadmap document

The FIW Report (F.4.a, FIW Report 1) includes proposed edits to the Draft HMS Roadmap (Appendix A), generated during the FIW's April 23, 2025, meeting. Members of the FIW discussed next steps for the Roadmap document, including whether and when the Council should consider further modifications to it and whether to include the Terms Appendix as part of the Roadmap (see March Agenda Item I.3.a, Supplemental [HMSMT Report 1](#)).

In addition, the Council should consider whether the Roadmap:

- A. Should be further fleshed out with more detail and serve as the repository for products and information, or
- B. If it should be considered a strategic document that serves as a high level guide for Roadmap-related activities.

Under the first scenario, the Roadmap would not be considered complete until written products have been incorporated as new sections in the Roadmap document. Under the second scenario, the Roadmap would be adopted with the current level of detail, and resulting work products would be maintained elsewhere, such as in Council Operating Procedures (COP) or the Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

Fisheries Innovation Workgroup:

The FIW's charge (see November 2024 [Decision Summary Document](#)) includes:

- Modification of COP 20 (HMS EFP process)
- Improvement of HMS EFP guidance
- Development of HMS EFP performance goals, including acceptable bycatch and metrics to evaluate EFP performance
- Consideration of the National Seafood Strategy as it pertains to HMS fisheries
- Review of the draft HMS Roadmap, as appropriate
- Discussion of relevant innovative fishery tools or measures needed to support a robust HMS fishery

At its April 2025 meeting, the FIW considered a proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) (F.4.a, FIW Report 1, Appendix B). The Council should review the draft ToR, provide edits as appropriate, and adopt it as final. Note that the draft ToR includes a set of milestones for FIW activities. The FIW is meeting May 28, 2025, and may develop a supplemental report with additional information related to future workload, milestones, and written products for future Council consideration. The Council should provide guidance on future workload and a potential sequencing of FIW activities and products.

National Seafood Strategy:

Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1 is a summary of the NOAA National Seafood Strategy (NSS) and includes a crosswalk table highlighting the areas of alignment between the Roadmap goals and the NSS goals. The Council should consider the NSS and Attachment 1 and provide guidance to the FIW on next steps.

Highly Migratory Species Exempted Fishing Permits:

Process and timing: The FIW is tasked with developing options for the process and timing of EFP proposals. This issue is also briefly described in FIW Report 1. Much of the EFP framework modifications (bycatch, performance measures, process, etc.) will be documented in a revised COP 20 for future adoption by the Council. The development of those options is on a longer time frame and thus not available for inclusion in a modified COP 20 in the near future. However, given the interest in adding flexibility in the EFP process, the Council may wish to take a surgical approach by modifying just the timing (i.e., at which meetings would EFPs be considered) and/or the process (i.e., allow for a one or a two meeting process depending on circumstances). The one-meeting process has been used in the past, including in 2024, although never formalized in COP 20. Some members of the FIW have suggested the option of applying directly to National Marine Fisheries Service in certain circumstances, which could be an additional option for consideration. The Council should provide guidance on whether it would like to consider the limited COP 20 modification as early as the September Council meeting. This would be considered under the Membership Appointments and COPs Administrative agenda item.

Development of HMS EFP performance goals, including acceptable bycatch, and metrics to evaluate EFP performance: FIW Report 1 briefly summarizes the task of developing performance goals and metrics, including acceptable levels of bycatch, to evaluate the outcomes of EFP fishing. The FIW Report lists a small handful of potential evaluation metrics and intends to continue developing this approach. A key goal of the Roadmap is to test new and innovative fishing gears

and methods that may be suitable, effective, and ultimately authorized under the HMS FMP, as with deep set buoy gear fishing. However, before authorizing new gears and methods, data must be collected and analyzed. Identifying performance metrics is crucial to such an analysis.

The Council may wish to provide preliminary guidance on several other issues related to the HMS Roadmap and EFPs. These include improved EFP guidance for applicants, an improved framework for EFP reporting, the overarching EFP framework described in FIW Report 1, and requirements for observer coverage in EFP fishing. The Council should also provide guidance on future workload and milestones for the FIW.

Council Tasks:

- 1. Adopt the FIW Terms of Reference.**
- 2. Adopt Edits to the HMS Roadmap and Provide Guidance on Next Steps.**
- 3. Provide Guidance on Areas of Alignment the Roadmap and the National Seafood Strategy, EFP Acceptable Levels of Bycatch, EFP Process and Timing, EFP Performance Goals and Evaluation Metrics.**
- 4. Provide Guidance on Future FIW Workload, and Other Topics as Necessary.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1: National Marine Fisheries Service's National Seafood Strategy and Alignment with the Draft HMS Roadmap.
2. Agenda Item F.4.a, FIW Report 1.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.4 Highly Migratory Species Roadmap Development Kerry Griffin
- a. Report of the Fisheries Innovation Workgroup Christa Svensson, Josh Madeira
 - b. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. **Council Action:** Adopt FIW Terms of Reference and Roadmap, Provide Guidance on Next Steps

PFMC
05/21/2025