

SWORDFISH MANAGEMENT PROJECT PLANNING AND OBSERVER COVERAGE

Under this agenda item the Council is scheduled to provide guidance regarding swordfish management project planning. There are two components regarding this topic for consideration:

- 1) Review of the 2015 draft Swordfish Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan (SMMP);
- 2) Review of the current swordfish projects and exempted fishing permits (EFP) that are currently under way in support of fishery development.

In addition, the Council is scheduled to review and potentially modify the range of alternatives for increased drift gillnet (DGN) monitoring, and adopt a preliminary preferred alternative, if possible.

Review of the 2015 draft Swordfish Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan

In September 2015, the Council received a draft SMMP (Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 1 – Reposted from September 2015). Several components in the plan are complete or are in development. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will provide a supplemental report under this agenda item regarding actions NMFS and the Council have taken since its development. The Council should consider updating sections 4 and 5 of the SMMP (Actions and Implementation Plans) and prioritize projects or certain other aspects of the SMMP. In addition, there may be new items that warrant exploration under a revised management plan such as linked buoy gear or reducing the number of unused DGN permits.

Council staff also provide a summary of fishing activity to show fishery performance for each gear: number of active vessels, swordfish catch, price per pound, and total revenue (Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 2).

Review of the current swordfish projects and EFPs that are currently under way in support of fishery development and the SMMP

EFP applications have been submitted to NMFS for deep-set buoy gear, DGN Access to Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area ([Agenda Item E.2, Attachment 1, June 2015](#)), and shallow-set longline fishing inside the West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (see [Agenda Item H.3.a, Attachment 1, March 2015](#)). Only DSBG EFPs have been issued by NMFS with up to 6 vessels actively fishing to date (See Table 1, Agenda Item G.7 Attachment 2, June 2018) although approximately 63 applications are pending approval. At this meeting, additional DSBG permits may be recommend by the Council for implementation (See agenda Item G.6, June 2018).

In addition to the EFPs, the Council has tentatively scheduled consideration of the following projects as shown in the Council’s year at a glance (Agenda Item C.11, Attachment 1, June 2018):

<u>September 5-12, 2018</u> (Seattle)	<u>November 1-8, 2018</u> (San Diego)	<u>March 5-12, 2019</u> (Vancouver)	<u>June 18-25, 2019</u> (San Diego)
EFP Final Approval of Non-DSBG EFPs	Amendment Authorizing Shallow-set Longline Fishery: Scoping	Amendment Authorizing Shallow-set Longline Fishery: Range of Alternatives	Amendment Authorizing Shallow-set Longline Fishery: Preliminary Preferred Alternatives
DSBG Authorization: LE Criteria Range of Alternatives		DSBG Authorization: Final Preferred Alternatives	

The Council may want to consider the timing of EFP data availability regarding the development of amendments to authorize a shallow-set longline or DSBG fishery, which would benefit from the additional data coming from fishing under these EFPs.

Purpose and Need with Range of Alternatives for Increased DGN Monitoring

At the [September 2017 meeting](#), the Council adopted a revised purpose and need statement for enhanced monitoring (human observers or electronic monitoring) of the DGN fishery after the rule implementing protected species hard caps was withdrawn. The revised purpose and need statement will allow for further analysis of the monitoring alternatives included in the [September 2015 Preliminary Draft Environmental Assessment](#) of the hard cap rule, and consideration of the new alternatives (See Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 3 – Reposted from March 2018).

As noted in the Council’s purpose and need statement, the Council would like to “document bycatch and protected species interactions for evaluation of costs and benefits of the use of DGN gear.” In March 2018, NMFS submitted a supplemental report to provide additional information regarding the costs and benefits of the alternatives (Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 3 – Reposted from March 2018). The analysis of all action alternatives as it relates to increased observer coverage provided in Attachment 3, as well as in the [September 2015 draft EA](#), show that all action alternatives provide no direct effect to target, non-target and prohibited species; that catch rates would remain the same as baseline conditions; that the action alternatives may have minor indirect beneficial effects to these species by increasing the precision of catch and bycatch estimates through increased monitoring, and; all action alternatives would cause significant adverse economic effects on the fishing industry.

Based on current levels of human observer monitoring, approximately 20 percent of all DGN sets have been observed annually (See Table 7, Agenda Item G.7 Attachment 3). However, six to seven vessels in the DGN fleet are considered unobservable and the percent of unobservable sets ranges from 10 to 40 percent of all sets made per year (See Table 2, Agenda Item G.7 Attachment 3). Therefore the current range of alternatives may need to be modified or expanded to include

observation rates specific to electronic monitoring, to monitor finfish bycatch and protected species interactions at a level that would meet the targeted coverage rate of 20 percent across the entire fleet. Absent the previous goal of limiting protected species take to a specific cap, the rate of observations for the DGN fishery of 20 percent is considered by NMFS to be sufficient to determine exceedance of an incidental take statement, potential biological removals for marine mammals, to conduct stock assessment reviews, and to make negligible impact determinations.

Council Action:

Provide Guidance on Swordfish Management Project Planning, Review and Potentially Modify the Range of Alternatives for Increased DGN Monitoring, and Adopt a Preliminary Preferred Alternative, If Possible.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 1: Draft Pacific Coast Swordfish Fishery Management and Monitoring Plan, September 2015.
2. Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 2: Landings of swordfish by fishery, 2008-2017.
3. Agenda Item G.7, Attachment 3: Reposted Supplemental NMFS Report 3 from March 2018.
4. Agenda Item G.7.b: Public Comment 1.

Agenda Order:

- G.7 Swordfish Management Project Planning and Observer Coverage Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Provide Guidance on Swordfish Management Project Planning, Review and Potentially Modify the Range of Alternatives for Increased DGN Monitoring, and Adopt a Preliminary Preferred Alternative, If Possible

PFMC
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