

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON FUTURE
COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

Shallow Set Longline (SSL) Amendment Scoping

As a nation, we import approximately 75% of our swordfish, often from places with little or no environmental controls and high bycatch rates of sensitive species. It is therefore critical that we develop sustainable and accountable sources of domestically caught fish.

Pelagic longlining has often been maligned by many in the environmental community due to its historical bycatch rates of seabirds and protected species. However, modifications to the gear and new strategies for deployment have significantly reduced these interactions and virtually eliminated Leatherback mortality in the Hawaiian longline fishery since its inception. As a result, a number of longline fisheries are now certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council.

Both the Road Map in Section 4 of the Swordfish Management and Monitoring Plan and the Council's Year At A Glance call for revisiting authorization of SSL on the high seas. The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) is encouraged to see SSL Amendment Scoping on the Draft March 2019 Agenda, and we strongly recommend that it stay there.

Deep Set Buoy Gear (DSBG) Authorization FPA

Consistent with previous requests from the National Marine Fisheries Service (e.g. [Agenda Item C.5.a., Supplemental NMFS Report](#)), the HMSAS encourages the Council to schedule its adoption of a preliminary or final preferred alternative (PPA or FPA) at least two meetings following adoption of the Council's final range of alternatives, to leave adequate time for analysis of the alternatives. The current exempted fishing permits ([EFPs], particularly the standard DSBG EFPs that were issued in 2018) are providing valuable information pertaining to the authorization of DSBG. To date, only 3 out of the 11 linked buoy gear EFPs that were issued were fished, resulting in only 6 linked buoy gear trips fished so far.

The Council and HMS Advisory Bodies would benefit from additional data from these EFPs rather than taking final action to authorize both standard and linked buoy gear in March 2019. **Therefore, the HMSAS recommends the Council strike DSBG Authorization FPA from the Draft March 2019 Agenda.**