HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) discussed and recommends the following to the Council:

The HMSAS discussed the viability of the 10-year band of effort as opposed to the 2002-2004 timeframe for defining "current levels of effort" on albacore tuna in any Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) or Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) resolutions on the matter. The HMSAS suggest the Council direct the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) analyze the data and advise the best 10-year band for the U.S. albacore fishery. The HMSAS recommends the Council request National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) support the 10-year band of effort as a fair and equitable method of determining current effort that considers fluctuations in effort and landings due to market, ocean conditions, and other factors.

The HMSAS also recommended that the Council re-evaluate the dates of the band of effort as well as any proposed bands as to whether they should be moved forward in time to reflect the next Interim Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) North Pacific albacore stock assessment in 2011.

The HMSAS requests that the Council recommend appropriate pressure be effectively applied to ensure the IATTC workshop on current effort issues occurs in late September 2010.

The HMSAS requests the Council ask NMFS that the U.S. take a more aggressive approach to include U.S. issues onto the Northern Committee agenda.

The HMSAS asks the Council to request the U.S. delegation to the Northern Committee that the venue for the 2011 Northern Committee meeting be hosted by the U.S.

The HMSAS asks the Council to recommend and write to NMFS that the WCPFC compliance regulations for fishing west of 150° W longitude be re-evaluated. U.S. coastal vessels who register to fish west of 150° W longitude are required to leave vessel monitoring systems (VMS) transmitters on all year at a monthly cost, even if the vessel is fishing in a coastal fishery such as Dungeness crab. Also, the 15 minute intervals for reporting position from the units should be of a longer duration. The short interval is an added financial burden. Albacore trollers are not hindered by such issues of closed areas in the region west of 150° W longitude and only move at speeds of five to six knots, thus reporting automatically twice each day should be sufficient. Since there are no closed areas or seasons for troll albacore fishery, the HMSAS requests that the Council request an exemption for the troll albacore fishery.

The HMSAS reiterates its April position on biological reference points (BRPs). Because of insufficient data, the Council and NMFS should take no action until at least the 2011 stock assessment is completed. The international process through the ISC and Albacore Working

Group is deeply involved in this issue and moving forward. Much of this issue will be further discussed at the Albacore Working Group meeting July 2010 in Victoria, BC.

The HMSAS discussed the increase in reported net marked albacore in the 2009 season and recommends that Council ask NMFS to take a more aggressive approach to enforcement of this activity. Recommendations should be made through all Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) and especially the Technical Compliance Committee (TCC) and Northern Committee of the WCPFC.

The HMSAS recommends that the proposed Ad Hoc committee on international issues have two persons each from the HMSAS and HMSMT, and that the committee exists for a minimum of 2 years. Of particular interest for the HMSAS is the updated information from the Albacore Working Group this July and the information from the HMSMT on the best 10-year band or other means of measuring effort for the U.S. fishery. At the recent U.S./Canada treaty bilateral meeting, Mr. Moore reported on a potential Canadian method to define effort. All of these measures need to be analyzed for the effect on the U.S fleet.

The HMSAS recommends that Wayne Heikkila and Bob Obsorn be appointed to the Ad Hoc committee as representatives of the HMSAS.

Concerning Northern Bluefin tuna, the west coast harvest impacts are minimal, but can be important to some small coastal purse seiners and recreational fisheries. We understand the main problem is juvenile harvest by Asian fleets. The HMSAS suggests that the council advocate additional conservation measures for the Asian fleets that will not eliminate the U.S. economic opportunity for our west coast fleet.

The HMSAS discussed striped marlin issues and reiterates the HMSAS April 2010 statement, rewritten by Bob Osborn and reproduced below.

Striped Marlin

The WCPFC has moved with great speed to a draft Conservation Management Measure (CMM) at its 6th meeting in Tahiti. We are especially concerned that the CMM contains a very limited range of effort control dates for catches of striped marlin.

The HMSAS has not been provided an analysis of the potential impacts of this CMM on the HMS fisheries of the west coast. We would like to stress the importance of North Pacific striped marlin to the recreational HMS fisheries in southern California, which appear to remain under-appreciated by regulatory agencies and delegations to international organizations apparently due to the lack of adequate socioeconomic and catch and mortality data.

The HMSAS would like to urge the Council to continue to support the management of North Pacific striped marlin. However, we would like to stress that the west coast fishery is potentially vulnerable to enormous impacts from management measures not carefully considered. The draft CMM recommends effort be restricted to catch rates of 2001, 2002, and 2003. The current Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report for these years contains different catch numbers for the private recreational fleet that vary between 0 (zero) and 300 fish per year (obtained from an average of a longer range of years). The southern California recreational

marlin community knows the catch has never been zero but recognizes the catch does vary greatly.

Several factors combine to pose risks to west coast recreational North Pacific striped marlin fisheries. First, the southern California bight is the northernmost area for the migration of North Pacific striped marlin. Therefore, catch rates can vary greatly over multiple year periods due to oceanographic conditions that can severely limit availability but rarely completely eliminates it. Second, catch/effort data is widely believed to be under-sampled in private marinas that house the larger vessels typically used in this fishery. Third, socioeconomic data is lacking in this fishery providing the potential for under-appreciation of the impacts that a poorly designed CMM could exact. Fourth, regulatory agencies continue to use worst case scenario assumptions related to the live release of fish. As a result of these risks, impacts could be severe to the boating, tackle, and charter fishing industries solely from the lack of up-to-date information and current research.

Therefore, the HMSAS requests that the Council ask for the cooperation of NMFS in supplying timely and relevant support, information, and policies related to how they would implement effort reductions called for the draft Striped Marlin Conservation Management Measure and direct the HMSMT to work with the HMSAS and/or any Ad-Hoc Committees formed by the Council in order to ensure sufficient information is at hand so that US delegations can take learned positions on the Pacific Striped Marlin fishery.

This information should include chronological information related to catches and bycatch of Pacific Striped Marlin by US fishermen, information on survivability of released fish, and other information deemed appropriate as determined in the above process.

The HMSAS recommends that US delegations **NOT SUPPORT** the adoption of conservation management measures for Pacific striped marlin that entail additional effort reductions to US fishermen until adequate information is in hand to ensure that management measures are designed and optimized to minimize impacts to the myriad southern California businesses, the City of Avalon, and others who make a living supporting the recreational marlin fishery and other US fisheries that likely may be affected.

The HMSAS reiterates its support for research on North Pacific striped marlin to support stock assessments, provide accurate up-to-date socio-economic information on the southern California recreational marlin fishery, improve estimates on survivability of striped marlin caught and released in both recreational and commercial fisheries, and to develop gear modifications to increase survivability of released fish.

PFMC
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