

High Seas Pacific Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fisheries

Fishing gear type: Drift gillnet, longline, trawl, purse seine, pot, handline/pole and line, liners not elsewhere identified, and multipurpose vessels

Current category: Category I- drift gillnet; Category II- longline, trawl, purse seine, pot, handline/pole and line, liners not elsewhere identified, and multipurpose vessels.*

Basis for current classification on the LOF:

The drift gillnet component of this high seas fishery is classified as a Category I because it is an extension of the Category I “CA/OR thresher shark/swordfish drift gillnet (≥ 14 in. mesh) fishery” operating within U.S. waters, and is not a separate fishery. The gear used, fishing methods, and target species are the same, and longline vessels targeting Pacific HMS regularly cross into the high seas, and back, when fishing.

The longline, trawl, purse seine, pot, handline/pole and line, liners not elsewhere identified, and multipurpose vessel components are classified as Category II due to the lack of specific information on marine mammal abundance and interactions with fisheries on the high seas.

Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed:

Drift gillnet[†]: Long-beaked common dolphin, CA; Northern right-whale dolphin, CA/OR/WA; Pacific white-sided dolphin, CA/OR/WA; Risso’s dolphin, CA/OR/WA; Short-beaked common dolphin, CA/OR/WA; Short-finned pilot whale, CA/OR/WA.

Purse Seine: None documented.

Longline: Risso’s dolphin, CA/OR/WA.

Trawl[‡]: Undetermined

Pot: Undetermined

Handline/pole and line/Pole and Line: Undetermined.

Liners not elsewhere identified: Undetermined.

Multipurpose vessels: Undetermined.

Estimated number of current participants[§]: Drift gillnet- 4; Trawl- 3; Purse Seine- 8; Pot- 7; Longline- 62; Handline/pole and line/Pole and Line- 22; Liners not elsewhere identified- 1; Multipurpose vessels- 7.

Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery: Drift gillnet gear used in this fishery is subject to the Pacific Offshore Cetacean Take Reduction Plan (POCTRP) regulations (50 CFR 229.31).

* The troll component of this fishery is classified as a Category III because it is an extension of the Category III “AK North Pacific halibut, AK bottom fish, WA/OR/CA albacore, groundfish, bottom fish, CA halibut non-salmonid troll fishery” operating in U.S. waters, and is not a separate fishery. The gear used, fishing methods, and target species are the same, and longline vessels targeting Pacific HMS regularly cross into the high seas, and back, when fishing.

† The drift gillnet component of this high seas fishery is partially an extension of the Category I “CA/OR thresher shark/swordfish drift gillnet (≥ 14 in. mesh) fishery” operating within U.S. waters; the purse seine component is an extension of the Category II “CA tuna purse seine fishery” operating with U.S. waters; and the longline component is an extension of the Category II “CA pelagic longline fishery,” which does not operate in U.S. waters but lands catch on the U.S. West Coast. Therefore, the list of marine mammal species killed/injured in this fishery is identical to the list of those injured/killed in the U.S. waters component of these fisheries, minus coastal stocks, because these marine mammal species/stocks are also found on the high seas and the fisheries remain the same on both sides of the Exclusive Economic Zone boundary. Therefore, the high seas components of these fisheries pose the same risk to marine mammals as the fisheries operating in U.S. waters.

‡ **Error! Main Document Only.** Trawl and pot gear are not authorized under the Pacific HMS Fishery Management Plan. Because High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (HSFCA) permits are valid for five years, permits obtained in past years exist in the HSFCA permit database for trawl and pot gear. Therefore, while HSFCA permits exist for trawl and pot gear, it does not represent effort. In order to land fish species, fishers must be using an authorized gear type. Once these permits for unauthorized trawl and pot gear expire, the permit-holder will be required to obtain a permit for an authorized gear type.

§ The number of vessels and participants operating in the Pacific HMS High Seas fishery do not necessarily represent additional fishers than those accounted for in fisheries operating within U.S. waters. Many fishers holding Pacific HMS high seas fishing permits also fish within U.S. waters and are included in the numbers of estimated vessels and participants operating within those fisheries. The number of participants listed represents only the number of permits for the high seas component of the fishery.

Year added to the LOF: 2009

Category when originally listed: Category I- drift gillnet; Category II- gillnet, longline, trawl, purse seine, pot, handline/pole and line, seine-handline/pole and line, liners not elsewhere identified, and multipurpose vessels

Basis for original classification on the LOF:

The drift gillnet component of this high seas fishery was classified as a Category I because it is an extension of the Category I “CA/OR thresher shark/swordfish drift gillnet (≥ 14 in. mesh) fishery” operating within U.S. waters, and not a separate fishery. The gear used, fishing methods, and target species are the same, and longline vessels targeting Pacific HMS regularly cross into the high seas, and back, when fishing.

The gillnet, longline, trawl, purse seine, pot, handline/pole and line, seine-handline/pole and line, liners not elsewhere identified, and multipurpose vessel components were classified as Category II due to the lack of specific information on marine mammal abundance and marine mammal-fishery interactions on the high seas. Category II is the appropriate classification for new fisheries on the LOF for which there is little information on which to base a classification.

Estimated number of participants when originally listed: Drift gillnet- 5; Gillnet- 1; Trawl- 14; Purse Seine- 5; Pot- 8; Longline- 56; Handline/pole and line/Pole and Line- 18; Seine-Handline/pole and line- 1; Liners not elsewhere identified- 3; Multipurpose vessels- 9; Fishing vessels not elsewhere identified- 2.

Past names, if any: None.

Gear description/method for fishing: The Pacific HMS high seas fisheries are virtually the same as fisheries targeting Pacific HMS within U.S. waters. Authorized gear include surface hook-and-line (including troll, rod and reel, handline/pole and line, albacore jig, and live bait), harpoon (non-mechanical), drift gillnet (14 in (35.5 cm) stretch mesh or greater), pelagic longline, and purse seine (including ring, drum, and lampara nets). Pacific HMS incidentally caught by unauthorized gear may be landed under certain circumstances.

Target species: Pacific HMS fisheries target tunas (North Pacific albacore, yellowfin, bigeye, skipjack, and bluefin), billfish (striped marlin), sharks (common thresher, pelagic thresher, bigeye thresher, shortfin mako, and blue), swordfish, and dorado (i.e., dolphinfish) using several gear types. Species prohibited in Pacific HMS fisheries include any salmon species, great white shark, basking shark, megamouth shark, and Pacific halibut.

Spatial/temporal distribution of effort: The fishery management area for Pacific HMS covers U.S. waters from the U.S.-Mexico border to the U.S.-Canada border, and the adjacent high seas. The high seas components of Atlantic HMS fisheries are extensions of various Category I, II, and III fisheries operating in U.S. waters.

Levels of observer coverage each year :**

Observer coverage for the Category I “CA/OR thresher shark/swordfish drift gillnet (≥ 14 in. mesh)” (between 20%-23% from 2000-2008), Category II “CA tuna purse seine” (no current observer coverage), and the Category II “CA pelagic longline” (mandatory 100% coverage since 2004) fisheries operating in U.S. waters extend into the high seas. Observer data are not available for the other gear types used in the Category II Pacific HMS high seas fisheries.

Management and regulations:

Fisheries targeting Pacific HMS are managed under regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plan for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for HMS, adopted in April 2004. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) regulations (50 CFR 660, subpart K) address the target fish species as well as species protected by the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The MSA regulations lay out multiple restrictions for fishing for Pacific HMS with longline gear. Vessels fishing longline gear may not target HMS within U.S. waters. Targeting swordfish with shallow set longline gear or possessing a light stick on board the

** Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Report (SAR).

vessel west of 150° W. long. and north of the equator is prohibited. From April 1–May 31, longline gear is prohibited in the area bounded on the south by the equator, north by 15° N. lat., east by 145° W. long., and west by 180° long. Longline vessels must have a valid protected species workshop certificate onboard, along with safe handling and release tools for sea turtles and seabirds.

Along with the MSA requirements, drift gillnet fishing for Pacific HMS is managed under the MMPA through the POCTRP (50 CFR 229.31). The POCTRP regulations require multiple gear modifications from the May 1–January 31 fishing season, including a requirement that all extenders (buoy lines) be at least 6 fathoms (36 ft; 10.9 m) in length, all floatlines be fished at a minimum of 36 ft (10.9 m) below the surface, and all nets have operational pingers to a water depth of at least 100 fathoms (600 ft; 182.9 m). Also, all drift gillnet vessel operators must attend skipper education workshops before each fishing season.

History of Changes on the LOF

2010 LOF:

- Drift gillnet: Estimated number of participants was updated from 5 to 4.
- Trawl: Estimated number of participants was updated from 14 to 3.
- Purse seine: Estimated number of participants was updated from 5 to 8.
- Pot: Estimated number of participants was updated from 8 to 7.
- Longline: Estimated number of participants was updated from 56 to 62.
- Handline/pole and line: Estimated number of participants was updated from 18 to 22.
- Liners not elsewhere identified: Estimated number of participants was updated from 3 to 1.
- Multipurpose vessels: Estimated number of participants was updated from 9 to 7.
- Gillnet: Removed from the LOF. The HSFCA permit for this fishery expired and was not renewed.
- Seine-handline: Removed from the LOF. The HSFCA permit for this fishery expired and was not renewed.
- Fishing vessels not elsewhere identified: Removed from the LOF. The HSFCA permit for this fishery expired and was not renewed.