




Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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Michael P. Luisi, Chairman | G. Warren Elliott, Vice Chairman
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MEMORANDUM

Date: April 10, 2017
To: Council
From: Jason Didden  and Matthew Seeley
Subject: Highly Migratory Species (HMS) and Law Enforcement Joint Committees Meeting Summary

On April 6, 2017 the HMS and Law Enforcement Committees met jointly to discuss HMS permitting/reporting/compliance issues and develop potential recommendations from the Council to NMFS HMS and the HMS Advisory Panel (AP). The HMS AP is meeting May 9-11, 2017 (agenda in development) and will be considering similar issues. Committee members in attendance included Dewey Hemilright (HMS Chair) John McMurray (HMS Vice-chair and Law Enforcement Chair), Emily Gilbert (for NMFS/John Bullard), Steve Heins, Stew Michels, Ward Slacum, Sara Winslow, LCDR Patricia Bennet (U.S. Coast Guard), Chris Batsavage, and Adam Nowalsky. Other participants included Michael Luisi, Warren Elliott, Pat Augustine, Brad McHale (NMFS HMS), Margo Schulze-Haugen (NMFS HMS), Mike Johnson, Wynn Carney (NOAA Law Enforcement), Pam Lyons Gromen, Greg DiDomenico, José Montañez (MAFMC Staff), Matt Seeley (MAFMC Staff), and Jason Didden (MAFMC Staff).

NMFS HMS staff provided an overview of permitting and reporting requirements for handgear permits. LCDR Patricia M. Bennett (U.S. Coast Guard) provided an overview of upcoming U.S. Coast Guard guidance (being finalized) regarding which vessels must have commercial fishing safety inspections. Committee and public concerns centered around fairness in terms of the requirements for various HMS fishery participants as well as obtaining complete HMS catch accounting. Background for these issues can be found in the briefing materials, located at <http://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2017/joint-hms-law-enforcement-committee-meeting-webinar>.

Following questions/discussion by committee members and the public, the joint Committees agreed by unanimous consent to the following recommendations:

1. Partition the HMS Party/Charter permit into two permits: Party/Charter/no sale (pure recreational) and Party/Charter/sale (mixed recreational/commercial). Party/Charter/sale would require operators to supply their USCG safety inspection decal number to acquire a permit. This would allow recreational fishermen with no intention to sell HMS fish to avoid the USCG safety inspection decal and the associated costs in passing inspection, while still more clearly identifying the universe of vessels with commercial transactions.

2. Require logbook or VTR reporting for HMS Charter/Headboat and General Category permits so there is a more uniform 2-ticket system (vessel and dealer reports) for tracking HMS sales (do so in a way that avoids duplicate reporting).

Several other potential measures were discussed, including requiring Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and paper applications for HMS permits that allow for the sale of fish, but no motions were made regarding these measures.

The Council will consider these Committee recommendations during Committee reports on April 13, 2017 (<http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/april-2017>). Any recommendations adopted by the Council will be forwarded to NMFS' HMS division and the HMS AP for possible future action.