



Meeting Summary

Market Squid Advisory Panel

July 14, 2022, 3:00-5:00 pm

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) convened the third meeting of the Market Squid Advisory Panel (MSAP) members on July 14, 2022. Nine of ten MSAP members attended, along with ODFW and Oregon State Police (OSP) staff, and members of the public. ODFW described the timeline and process for developing a light boat prohibition proposal to fulfill the request from the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) at its February 2022 meeting. This item will likely be before the Commission January or February 2023. ODFW then outlined the three agenda items for the meeting agenda and sought input from the MSAP on each:

- How to define a light boat and what activities would be prohibited
- Fleetwide opinion survey on light boat prohibition
- New, emerging, or other issues identified by the panel

Light Boat Definition

MSAP members suggested possible ways to define light boats for rule making that centered on boats that use lights specifically to attract squid but do not deploy gear to catch squid. Members also discussed and provided information on how light boats interact with seiners in the California fishery, including applicability of United States Coast Guard (USCG) right-of-way regulations and a "gentlemen's agreement" to not set a seine net within 1/8 of a mile of a light boat at night. They estimated about 15 light boats had participated in the Oregon fishery since 2016, with 4-6 light boats participating at any given time.

Vessel Survey

The subject of a vessel survey to get opinions on a light boat prohibition including its purpose and options on how to conduct the survey were discussed. The MSAP reached consensus of surveying catcher vessels that have made landings of market squid utilizing seine gear in Oregon from 2016 to present. It was agreed that the best option was to allow one response per vessel and link the response to the vessel. Results would then be summarized for the Commission, but individual responses would be confidential. The survey would ask respondents to rank three options related to prohibiting the use of light boats in Oregon: a) a complete prohibition; b) no prohibition on light boats; c) a limitation on the number of light boats.

The MSAP also discussed conducting a broader survey to seek opinions on these options for light boat prohibition proposals from a broader range of the commercial fishing community that would include existing light boats, potential light boats, and the crabbing fleet. The MSAP was generally in favor of conducting this broader fishing community survey, recognizing that potential respondents cannot be limited to these groups since light boats or potential light boats are not identifiable from landings data.

New and Emerging Issues

Several new and emerging issues were discussed by the MSAP including the recent issue of bycatch of small black cod, potential use of a grate like that required for purse seine fishing for fin fish, adding catch sorting to the agenda for a future MSAP meeting, and communication with the crab fleet and how to improve it to reduce potential conflict. There was also a suggestion to consider implementing regulations like those in California that require shading of lights used on light boats.

Public Comment

ODFW then opened the meeting to public comment. Several attendees commented on the use of light boats and their operation. A question was asked about if staff would include information about the potential for unintended consequences of prohibiting the use of light boats for the Commission. ODFW affirmed such information would be included to the extent possible but would be largely speculative due to lack of data. It was also suggested that the Commission should be made aware of how light boats operate and the many benefits of using them. There was comment on the need to move the squid fishery to limited entry before prohibiting or limiting light boats, and to also consider requiring permits for boats to braille squid and that there should be separate permits for seine boats, light boats, and braille boats. ODFW reiterated that the public is encouraged to provide information to the Commission either through public comment on non-agenda items at any Commission meeting, providing public comment on the light boat agenda item when it is on the Commission's agenda, or by sending in written public comments to the Commission.