



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD476]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Advisory Panel

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; solicitation of nominations.

SUMMARY: NMFS solicits nominations for the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Advisory Panel (AP). NMFS consults with and considers the comments and views of the HMS AP when preparing and implementing Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) or FMP amendments for Atlantic tunas, swordfish, sharks, and billfish.

Nominations are being sought to fill approximately one-third (10) of the seats on the HMS AP for 3-year appointments. Individuals with definable interests in the recreational and commercial fishing and related industries, environmental community, academia, and non-governmental organizations are considered for membership on the HMS AP.

DATES: Nominations must be received on or before [*INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: You may submit nominations and requests for the Advisory Panel Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures by email to *HMSAP.Nominations@noaa.gov*. Include in the subject line the following identifier: “HMS AP Nominations.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Cooper at (301) 427-8503 or via email at *HMSAP.Nominations@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Atlantic HMS fisheries (tunas, billfish, swordfish, and sharks) are managed under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery

Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act; 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*). The 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS FMP and its amendments are implemented by regulations at 50 CFR part 635.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires the establishment of an AP for each FMP for HMS, *i.e.*, tunas, swordfish, billfish, and sharks (16 U.S.C. 1854(g)(1)(A)-(B)). Since the inception of the AP in 1998, NMFS has consulted with and considered the comments and views of AP members when preparing and implementing HMS FMPs or FMP amendments. In this notice, NMFS solicits nominations for the HMS AP. Nominations are being sought to fill approximately one-third (10) of the seats on the HMS AP for 3-year appointments. Individuals with definable interests in the recreational and commercial fishing and related industries, environmental community, academia, and non-governmental organizations are considered for membership on the HMS AP as described below.

Procedures and Guidelines

A. Nomination Procedures for Appointments to the AP

Nomination packages should include:

1. The name of the nominee and a description of his/her interest in HMS or HMS fisheries, or in particular species of sharks, swordfish, tunas, or billfish;
2. Contact information, including mailing address, phone, and email of the nominee;
3. A statement of background and/or qualifications;
4. A written commitment that the nominee shall actively participate in good faith, and consistent with ethics obligations, in the meetings and tasks of the HMS AP;
and
5. A list of outreach resources that the nominee has at his/her disposal to communicate qualifications for HMS AP membership.

Qualification for membership includes one or more of the following: (1) experience in HMS recreational fisheries; (2) experience in HMS commercial fisheries; (3) experience in fishery-related industries (*e.g.*, marinas, bait and tackle shops); (4) experience in the scientific community working with HMS; and/or (5) representation of a private, non-governmental, regional, national, or international organization that represents marine fisheries, or environmental, governmental, or academic interests regarding HMS.

Tenure for the HMS AP

Member tenure will be for 3 years, with approximately one-third of the members' terms expiring on December 31 of each year. Nominations are sought for terms beginning January 2024 and expiring December 2026.

Members can serve a maximum of three consecutive terms (a total of 9 consecutive years). Afterwards, a member must then sit off the HMS AP for a single year before becoming eligible to apply for a new term.

B. Participants

Nominations for the HMS AP will be accepted to allow representation from commercial and recreational fishing interests, academic/scientific interests, and the environmental/non-governmental organization community, for individuals who are knowledgeable about HMS and/or HMS fisheries. Current representation on the HMS AP, as shown in Table 1, consists of 12 members representing commercial interests, 12 members representing recreational interests, 4 members representing environmental interests, 4 academic representatives, and the ICCAT Advisory Committee Chair. NMFS seeks to fill five commercial, three recreational, one environmental, and one academic sector vacancies for terms starting in 2024.

In filling vacancies, NMFS will seek to maintain the current representation from each of the sectors. NMFS also considers species expertise and representation from the

fishing regions (Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean) to ensure the diversity and balance of the HMS AP. Table 1 includes the current representation on the HMS AP by sector, region, and species with terms that are expiring identified in the “Member Status” column. It is not meant to indicate that NMFS will only consider persons who have expertise in the species or fishing regions that are listed. Rather, NMFS will aim toward having as diverse and balanced an AP as possible. The intent is to have a group that, as a whole, reflects an appropriate and equitable balance and mix of interests given the responsibilities of the HMS AP.

Table 1 -- Current Representation on the HMS AP by Sector, Region, and Species.

Sector	Fishing Region	Species	Date Appointed	Date Term Expires	Member Status
Academic	SE/Gulf	Sharks	1/1/2022	12/31/2023	Expiring
Academic	NE/Mid-Atlantic	Tuna/Shark	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Academic	SE/Gulf	Sharks	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Academic	Northeast	Tunas	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Commercial	Gulf of Mexico	Tuna	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Commercial	Southeast	Swordfish	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Commercial	Mid-Atlantic/SE	Tuna	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Commercial	Gulf of Mexico	Sharks	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Commercial	Northeast	Tuna	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Commercial	SE/Gulf	Swordfish/Tuna	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Commercial	Gulf of Mexico	Tuna	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Commercial	Northeast	Tuna	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Commercial	NE/SE/GOM	HMS/Tuna	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Commercial	Southeast	Sharks	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Commercial	Gulf of Mexico	All	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Commercial	Northeast	Swordfish/Tuna	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Environmental	All	Tuna	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Environmental	All	HMS	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Environmental	All	Shark	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Environmental	Caribbean	HMS	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Recreational	All	HMS	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Recreational	Northeast	Tuna/Sharks	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Recreational	All	HMS	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Recreational	Northeast	Tuna	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Recreational	Gulf of Mexico	HMS	1/1/2023	12/31/2025	Active
Recreational	All	Billfish	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring

Recreational	Mid-Atlantic	Shark	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Recreational	Southeast/Mid Atlantic	Billfish	1/1/2021	12/31/2023	Expiring
Recreational	Northeast	Tuna/Shark	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Recreational	NE/SE/GOM	All	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Recreational	Mid-Atlantic	HMS	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active
Recreational	Southeast	HMS/Billfish	1/1/2022	12/31/2024	Active

Note: Terms that are expiring or associated with current members stepping down are marked as “Expiring”.

Five additional members on the HMS AP include one member representing each of the following Councils: New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. The HMS AP also includes 22 ex-officio participants: 20 representatives of the coastal states and 2 representatives of the interstate commissions (the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission).

NMFS will provide the necessary administrative support, including technical assistance, for the HMS AP. However, NMFS will not compensate participants with monetary support of any kind. Depending on availability of funds, members may be reimbursed for travel costs related to the HMS AP meetings.

C. Meeting Schedule

Meetings of the HMS AP will be held as frequently as necessary but are routinely held twice each year. In recent years, meetings have been held once in the spring, and once in the fall. The meetings may be held in conjunction with public hearings.

Dated: November 1, 2023.

Jennifer M. Wallace,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.