

Memorandum

Date: November 27, 2024

To: Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director

Subject: **Petition to authorize the use of harpoon as a landing aid (Tracking Number: 2024-04)**

At their August 14, 2024, meeting, the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) referred a petition for regulation change (2024-04) to the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) for review and recommendation. The petition submitted by Benjamin D. Mitchell (Applicant), requests to amend Section 27.90, 28.65 and 195 of Title 14, CCR. The proposed change would explicitly allow the use of a harpoon as a landing aid for tuna species in the recreational fishery.

Section 28.20, Title 14, CCR, allows for the use of a harpoon to assist with the take of Pacific halibut with limitations set forth by section 28.95, Title 14, CCR. Section 28.95, specifies that harpoons may be used to take skates, rays, and sharks and to assist in the taking of Pacific halibut. No other species are explicitly allowed to be taken or landed with harpoons.

Outside of California, harpoons are a common landing aid for large tuna on small recreational boats. In recent years, more and larger (250+ lbs) bluefin tuna have been caught along the California coast, highlighting the need for a new regulation allowing the use of a harpoon as a landing aid for tunas.

The Department recommends this petition be granted in part and that a future rulemaking be considered to increase clarity and explicitly allow for the use of harpoons to assist with the landing of otherwise-legally-caught tuna species in the recreational fishery.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please contact Dr. Craig Shuman, Marine Regional Manager at (805) 568-1246 or by email at r7regionalmgr@wildlife.ca.gov.

ec: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
November 27, 2024
Page 2

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