



# International Game Fish Association

## Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum

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November 14, 2016

Mr. Herb Pollard, Chair  
Pacific Fishery Management Council  
1100 NE Ambassador Place, #101  
Portland, Oregon 97220

### **Re: Agenda Item 1.5 Swordfish Fishery Management**

Dear Chair Pollard and Council Members,

The International Game Fish Association (IGFA) is a non-profit organization that represents recreational anglers throughout the world. IGFA was established in 1939, has active members in over 100 countries, is the governing body for international recreational fishing, and provides rules for ethical angling practices.

IGFA wishes to address federal management of the west coast swordfish fishery. We understand the need for U.S. commercial anglers to provide swordfish to the American public. We also acknowledge that, on average, U.S. commercial fisheries are typically more sustainably managed than those in other foreign countries. That said however, the west coast drift gillnet (DGN) fishery is subject to excessive levels of bycatch that make it unsustainable. As such, the IGFA strongly urges the Council to phase out DGNs and to provide the commercial industry with alternative gear that will allow them to be competitive with imports from foreign fisheries while, at the same time, incurring less bycatch.

Our organization has been closely following the testing of deep set buoy gear (DSBG) and we are very encouraged by the results reported to date. DSBG incurs much less bycatch and minimal bycatch mortality, while providing superior product quality. IGFA respectfully requests that the Council continue to move forward in authorizing DSBG as part of the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan.

IGFA supports a phased approach for permit issuance with a limited number of initial permits until further evaluation indicates what level of participation the fishery can support. We suggest that permits for DSBG be given to individuals that have participated in DSBG testing as well as to active participants in the DGN and harpoon fisheries. IGFA would also like the Council to consider allowing DGN permits to be traded for DSBG permits. Because DSBG has been shown to significantly reduce interactions with sea turtles, we are in favor of allowing this gear in the Pacific Leatherback Conservation Area and loggerhead conservation areas.

The International Game Fish Association thanks the Council for considering these recommendations. It is our sincere hope that we can find a path forward that will allow commercial fishermen on the west coast to harvest swordfish and compete with foreign markets, while doing so in a manner that minimizes negative impacts to the environment.

Sincerely,

Jason Schratwieser  
IGFA Conservation Director

*The International Game Fish Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to the conservation of game fish and the promotion of responsible, ethical angling practices through science, education, rule making and record keeping.*

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