

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON YELLOWFIN
TUNA OVERFISHING

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) reviewed the letter from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) stating that under the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) in 2006, new language addresses how the U.S. must respond when a stock is determined to be overfished or approaching a condition of being overfished due to excessive international fishing pressure, and for which there are no management measures to end overfishing under an international agreement to which the U.S. is a party. Under the reauthorized MSA (new section §304(i)), within one year of notification of the conditions indicated above, the Council must develop recommendations for domestic regulations to address the relative impact of fishing vessels of the United States on the stock, and to submit those recommendations to NMFS. The relative impact of U.S. fishing vessels on yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean is minimal - roughly 1% of the eastern Pacific Ocean overall catch. The Council has met the requirement to address domestic impacts on yellowfin tuna through the fishery management plan process and is expected to participate in future implementation of domestic regulations through involvement with NMFS in implementing conservation and management resolutions under the Tuna Conventions Act. Should the characteristics of the U.S. fisheries change such that a greater impact on yellowfin tuna stocks occurs in the future, then the Council may need to direct the HMSMT to reevaluate the need for additional domestic regulation.

A second requirement under the reauthorized MSA (§304(i)) is that the Council provide recommendations to be submitted to the Secretary of State and Congress for international actions that will end overfishing and rebuild the affected stocks, taking into account the relative impact of vessels of other nations and vessels of the United States on the relevant stock. Regarding this requirement, the HMSMT will provide recommendations under Agenda Item J.6.

PFMC
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