

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS TO REGIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATIONS

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) suggests the Council provide conservation and management recommendations to the U.S. delegations of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Northern Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) prior to their upcoming meetings as detailed below.

In addition to the HMSMT recommendations made at the April 2008 Council meeting, the team suggests the following recommendation for the IATTC:

1) That the IATTC develop an annual reporting requirement in the form of an annual Member and Cooperating Non-Member National Report containing information on their respective fisheries and management activities. The format for this report should incorporate applicable elements of the IATTC Data Provision Resolution (C-03-05). In addition to descriptive statistics, the report should specifically detail the manner and magnitude in which compliance with IATTC resolutions is occurring. Currently, there is no reporting mechanism to monitor national compliance. Without a scorecard on compliance, the IATTC will not be able to conduct an adequate review of its performance as agreed to at the recently held meeting of RFMO's in San Francisco.

The HMSMT suggests the following recommendation for the Northern Committee:

1) That the Northern Committee of the WCPFC formally add striped marlin to the species complex under its authority so that management measures can be coordinated across the North Pacific. The recent pessimistic stock assessment results for striped marlin in the North Pacific conducted by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific (ISC) demonstrates that management is needed. The stock assessment demonstrated that catch of striped marlin north of 20° N latitude is significant. However, there is uncertainty about the stock structure of striped marlin in the Pacific with potential separation of stocks in the eastern and western Pacific.

Finally, the HMSMT makes the following suggestions for both commissions:

1) Regarding striped marlin, the Council should urge that both the IATTC and WCPFC work to resolve the stock structure question as soon as possible based on the best available scientific information so that appropriate management and conservation measures can be implemented. The 2007 ISC assessment indicated that the status of striped marlin in the North Pacific is substantially depleted. However, the IATTC's most recent assessment of striped marlin in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) was completed in 2003 and indicated that the status of striped marlin in the EPO was above MSY. These conflicting results without understanding the stock structure may mislead management.

- 2) That improved coordination take place between the IATTC and the WCPFC for species and stocks co-occurring under their respective authorities, particularly to address the time lag between a stock assessment and consideration of management measures. For example, the ISC produced an albacore assessment in late 2006. The WCPFC adopted this assessment in July 2007, too late for consideration by the IATTC at its June 2007 meeting.

PFMC
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