

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES INCLUDING IATTC MEETING AND NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION

Between the June and September Council meetings, three regional fishery management organization meetings of interest to the Council will occur. The Council may wish to provide recommendations to the U.S. delegations to these meetings. The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) will hold its 89th meeting June 30 to July 3. The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) Plenary meets July 15-20 (ISC15). The Northern Committee (NC) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) will hold its 11th Regular Session August 31 to September 3.

Attachment 1 summarizes those issues the U.S. plans to focus on at the upcoming IATTC meeting. This list is taken from the March 2015 National Marine Fisheries Service Report ([Agenda Item H.2.c](#)).

The ISC is the science provider to the WCPFC for northern stocks including North Pacific albacore tuna, Pacific bluefin tuna, swordfish, marlins, and oceanic sharks. ISC working groups conduct stock assessments and the ISC maintains a catch database for these stocks. The Plenary develops conservation advice for consideration by the NC and the WCPFC as a whole. (Results of the Plenary are presented to the WCPFC Science Committee (SC); this year the SC meets August 5-13.). In 2015, the ISC Plenary will review new stock assessments for mako shark and striped marlin and update conservation advice as necessary.

According to the work plan adopted by the NC in 2014, in 2015 the NC will continue development of precautionary-approach based management frameworks for North Pacific albacore tuna, Pacific bluefin tuna, and swordfish in the North Pacific. These frameworks would include appropriate reference points and pre-agreed actions that will be taken in the event each of the particular limit reference points is breached (decision rules).

In 2014, the NC adopted a biomass based limit reference point ($20\%SSB_{current F=0}$) for North Pacific albacore as part of a Precautionary Management Framework for the stock. The Framework's "management objective for the NP albacore fishery is to maintain the biomass, with reasonable variability, around its current level in order to allow recent exploitation levels to continue and with a low risk of breaching the Limit Reference Point."

The ISC conducted a [workshop on a Management Strategy Evaluation \(MSE\) for North Pacific albacore](#) April 16-17, 2015. The ISC provided the following description of the workshop:

At the 14th Meeting of ISC, members recognized the benefits of MSE and agreed they should be used to evaluate alternative management procedures for ISC species of interest. As a first step, and with endorsement from the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission-Northern Committee, the ISC is charged with conducting an MSE for North Pacific albacore tuna. To facilitate completion of this MSE it is important that managers, stakeholders and scientists fully understand the key components required in developing an MSE, and the role each group plays.

The purpose of the ISC Management Strategy Evaluation Workshop is to review the objective, benefits, and requirements to implement an MSE, as well as recent progress made by tuna RFMOs towards adopting and implementing the MSE process. Discussions will aim to define the roles of managers, stakeholders and scientists in the MSE process, particularly as they relate to facilitating the completion of an MSE for North Pacific albacore tuna.

According to the ISC website, “In attendance were 71 participants, including fishery managers, stakeholders and scientists. While the presentations were well received and informative, there was general agreement that regular workshops on MSE would be beneficial.”

At its August 31-September 3 meeting, the NC will provide direction to the ISC on the development of this MSE. At this meeting, the Council has the opportunity to develop recommendations on alternative target and limit reference points, harvest control rules, and management measures to be subjected to MSE. These could be crafted as alternative management programs combining all these elements.

The NC also adopted a stock rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin tuna, which was implemented by WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2014-04. At the 2015 meeting the NC has the option to recommend any changes to this rebuilding program and CMM.

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) met May 13-15 and prepared a report with recommendations on measures to be evaluated in the North Pacific albacore MSE.

Council Action:

- 1. Provide Recommendations to the U.S. Delegation to the 89th IATTC Meeting.**
- 2. Provide Recommendations to the U.S. Delegation to the Northern Committee on:**
 - a. Development of the Management Strategy Evaluation for North Pacific Albacore Tuna Including Biological Reference Points and Decision Rules to be Evaluated,**
 - b. Development of Precautionary Management Frameworks for Pacific Bluefin Tuna and Swordfish, and**
 - c. Revisions to the Pacific Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Program (CMM 2014-04).**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.1, Attachment 1: Summary of Priority Issues at the 89th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission Meeting.
2. Agenda Item E.1.a, HMSMT Report.

Agenda Order:

E.1 International Issues

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- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Develop Recommendations to the U.S. Delegations to the 89th IATTC Meeting and the 11th Northern Committee Meeting

PFMC

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