

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

**Updates on Pacific Bluefin Tuna and the Resumed 90th Meeting of the Inter-American
Tropical Tuna Commission**

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) reviewed the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Reports (see [Agenda Item J.1.a, NMFS Report](#), [Agenda Item J.1.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 2](#)) and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Staff Report (see [Agenda Item J.1, Supplemental Attachment 3](#)) on the outcomes of the Joint Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) – Northern Committee to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Working Group (WG) meeting. The HMSMT was also briefed by NMFS staff on the contents of the U.S. Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) proposal to the IATTC. The WG recommended the IATTC adopt the same commercial PBF catch limits in the current resolution ([Resolution C-14-06, Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, 2015-2016](#)) for an additional two years. The current catch limit is 6,600 metric tons (mt) for all members and cooperating non-members, with 600 mt set aside for the United States over two years. This recommendation is consistent with the recommendation from the HMSMT at the March 2016 meeting, during which it recommended commercial catch limits at least as precautionary as the current catch limits (i.e., those in Resolution C-14-06).

NMFS staff also informed the HMSMT that the U.S. is considering revising the PBF proposal to the IATTC to adopt the initial rebuilding target that the WCPFC adopted in 2014—the historical median of spawning stock biomass to be achieved by 2024. The WG also intends to develop a secondary rebuilding target to be achieved by 2030 at its second meeting to be held in late summer of 2017. Consequently, the U.S. is also considering revising the proposal to include a provision to adopt a second rebuilding target in 2018, following the second meeting of the WG. The HMSMT views the initial rebuilding target as inadequate and is concerned that the secondary rebuilding target may also be inadequate; the U.S. should continue to pursue a rebuilding target of maximum sustainable yield (or its proxy). However, the HMSMT does view this next rebuilding target as progress toward rebuilding the PBF stock.

Lastly, the WG requested that the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) evaluate a suite of harvest scenarios. The ISC intends to host a stakeholder meeting in Japan in the spring of 2017 to present the results of the analyses. The HMSMT will continue to follow the subject and suggests the Council comment on the scenarios after the results become available, likely at the June 2017 Council meeting.

WCPFC Annual Meeting

The situation summary indicates that the Council may want to provide recommendations to the U.S. delegation for the upcoming WCPFC meeting to be held December 5 through 9, 2016. However, the HMSMT believes it would be more appropriate to provide comments at the November 2016 Council meeting because the issues to be considered by the WCPFC will be available for review on the WCPFC meeting website at that time. The HMSMT understands from Council staff there will be adequate time between the November 2016 Council meeting and the WCPFC meeting to prepare and transmit a letter to the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office with Council recommendations.

HMSMT Recommendations

- Endorse U.S. PBF proposal
- U.S. should continue to pursue maximum sustainable yield (or its proxy) as the ultimate rebuilding target, as opposed to the proposed intermediate targets

PFMC
09/18/16