

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Pacific Bluefin Tuna

As discussed in March 2017 (see [Agenda Item J.5, Situation Summary](#)), currently the international management issue of greatest relevance to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is the development and implementation of a rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin tuna. The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) held a Pacific Bluefin Tuna International Stakeholders Meeting in Tokyo, Japan, April 18-20. ISC presented the results of its analysis of 15 rebuilding scenarios identified by fishery managers in the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) processes (see Attachment 1). These scenarios were evaluated under different assumptions about recruitment and with respect to six rebuilding targets. The rebuilding targets include the current target (median spawning biomass, 1952-2014), increases from that target, and variations on a target of 20 percent of the unfished spawning stock biomass. The meeting facilitated stakeholder discussion of the selection of the next rebuilding target. Although the meeting was not intended to produce any particular recommendations, the discussion will no doubt inform deliberations by the WCPFC Northern Committee and IATTC. The Northern Committee is scheduled to meet August 28-31. (A second joint Northern Committee-IATTC meeting on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Conservation Management will take place concurrently.) In 2016, an outcome of the joint meeting was a commitment to adopt in 2017 a second rebuilding target to be achieved by 2030 (the current target is to be achieved by 2024).

Conservation Measures for Tropical Tunas

The IATTC met February 7-10, 2017, in La Jolla, California. The purpose of the meeting was to adopt a conservation and management measure for tropical tunas (bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin) that would apply to 2017 and beyond. However, the parties were only able to adopt a resolution for 2017 ([C-17-01](#)), which rolls over four measures of the previous resolution and also establishes a total allowable catch (TAC) limit for yellowfin and bigeye combined (see [Agenda Item J.5.b, Supplemental NMFS Report, March 2017](#)). Thus, at its July 24-28 meeting in Mexico City the IATTC must consider, and should adopt, a resolution for tropical tunas for 2018 and any subsequent years. Similarly, the WCPFC is set to adopt a new tropical tuna measure at its annual meeting in December. To facilitate development of the measure an intersessional meeting to further develop the draft Bridging Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) on Tropical Tuna is scheduled for August 22-24, 2017, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Striped Marlin

On August 17, 2016, the Council received a letter (Attachment 2) from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) notifying the Council that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock of striped marlin (*Kajika audax*) is overfished and subject to overfishing. Per Section 304(i) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Pacific Council is obligated to respond to this determination. The Council must within one year, develop and submit recommendations to the U.S. Secretary of

Commerce for domestic regulations to address the relative impact of fishing vessels of the United States on the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock, if necessary, and develop and submit recommendations to the Secretary of State and Congress for international actions that will end overfishing on the stock. According to the [2015 stock assessment](#) the boundary of the Western and Central North Pacific stock is defined to be the waters of the Pacific Ocean west of 140° W and north of the equator. Furthermore, the Council's Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and pursuant regulations prohibit the retention and landing of striped marlin by commercial fishing vessels. For these reasons it is unlikely that any fishing vessels managed under the HMS FMP catch fish from the Western and Central North Pacific stock. Thus, while there seems to be little or no basis for recommending additional regulations for west coast vessels, the Council does have the opportunity to make recommendations for international actions. The WCPFC adopted a conservation and management measure for striped marlin in 2010 (CMM 2010-01, Attachment 3), which calls for each member with vessels fishing in the convention area north of the equator to make a 20 percent catch reduction from the highest catch between 2000 and 2003. In its [2015 Plenary Report](#) the ISC offered the following conservation advice:

The stock has been in an overfished condition since 1977, with the exception of 1982 and 1983, and fishing appears to be impeding rebuilding especially if recent (2007-2011) low recruitment levels persist. Projection results show that fishing at F_{MSY} could lead to median spawning biomass increases of 25%, 55%, and 95% from 2015 to 2020 under the recent recruitment, medium-term recruitment, and stock recruitment-curve scenarios. Fishing at a constant catch of 2,850 t could lead to potential increases in spawning biomass of 19% to over 191% by 2020, depending upon the recruitment scenario. In comparison, fishing at the 2010-2012 fishing mortality rate, which is 49% above F_{MSY} , could lead to changes in spawning stock biomass of -18% to +18% by 2020, while fishing at the average 2001-2003 fishing mortality rate ($F_{2001-2003}=1.15$), which is 82% above F_{MSY} , could lead to spawning stock biomass decreases of -32% to -9% by 2020, depending upon the recruitment scenario.

According to the [ISC catch table](#) for striped marlin, catch has trended downward since the early 1970s. Annual catch has averaged 2,855 mt for the 10 years, 2006-2015. (It should be noted that catches reported in the 2015 stock assessment, 2007-2013, show a higher annual average, 3,077 mt versus 2,868 mt in the ISC catch table, for this period).

Bigeye Tuna

Attachment 4 is an April 28, 2017, letter from Michael Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Administrator to Edwin Ebisui, Western Pacific Fishery Management Council Chair, notifying councils that NMFS will begin monitoring and reporting stock status of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) separately for the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) stock and the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) stock. NMFS has determined that the EPO stock is not subject to overfishing and not overfished. For the WCPO stock, NMFS has determined that it is subject to overfishing, but not overfished. Similar to the striped marlin situation, vessels managed under the HMS FMP are unlikely to catch fish from the WCPO stock.

NMFS intends to submit a supplemental report providing additional information on international management activities relevant to the Council.

Council Action:

Consider reports on international activities and provide recommendations, as appropriate.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 1: Draft Summary of Additional PBF Projections, International PBF Stakeholders Meeting, 25-27 April 2017, Mita Kaigisho, Japan.
2. Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 2: August 17, 2016, letter from William Stelle, Jr., to Chairman Pollard notifying the Council that National Marine Fisheries Service has determined that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock of striped marlin is overfished and subject to overfishing.
3. Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 3: WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure 2010-01 for Striped Marlin.
4. Agenda Item H.5, Attachment 4: April 28, 2017, letter from Michael Tosatto, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Administrator to Edwin Ebisui, Western Pacific Fishery Management Council Chair, notifying councils that NMFS will begin monitoring and reporting stock status of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) separately for the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) stock and the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) stock.

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PFMC
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