

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Bluefin Tuna

Members of the Highly Migratory Special Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) would like to thank National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), and all the individuals who have participated in bluefin tuna management for making good progress on advancing efforts to distribute the costs of rebuilding bluefin tuna more equitably across the range of the stock, particularly into the western Pacific Ocean. While work still remains in bringing all nations and fisheries on all age classes into the efforts for rebuilding the fishery, the work recently completed at the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) to incorporate more harvest scenarios into the international process appears to be gaining support for a broader application of conservation efforts which, if successful, will accelerate the rebuilding of the stock.

The HMSAS strongly supports the United States efforts to establish a second rebuilding target for bluefin tuna. Establishing a second target will aid in better understanding the productivity of Pacific bluefin tuna. Members of the HMSAS believe that if productivity can be maximized, it should equate to the species occupying a larger ocean footprint, which would seem likely to increase local availability of the fish and thus give a boost to both recreational and commercial fisheries for the species.

The HMSAS would also like to voice strong support for increased funding for tuna research on the West Coast. We believe a large gap exists, particularly in knowledge of the life history of bluefin tuna, that would result in an economic benefit to West Coast fishermen if such knowledge was obtained and applied in the fishery management regime. We believe both the bluefin tuna fishery and the albacore tuna fishery would benefit from the establishment of permanent tuna research funding in the southwest region.

Striped Marlin

The HMSAS notes that the identified stock of Western and Central Pacific Ocean striped marlin is not caught by fishing vessels operating under the authority of the PFMC.

Bigeye Tuna

The HMSAS notes that fisheries for bigeye tuna exist for the PFMC. An expanding commercial longline fishery exists as does an opportunistic recreational fishery. The recreational fishery in California benefits greatly from access to bigeye tuna in years that the tuna venture into our waters. These tuna are typically large individuals and are a very important target of recreational fishermen when the fish are available. Again, like striped marlin, the Western and Central Pacific bigeye stock is experiencing overfishing while the Eastern Pacific stock is not overfished nor is overfishing occurring.