



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

August 13, 2013

Mr. Michael Tosatto
Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service
Pacific Islands Region
1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110
Honolulu, HI 96814

Dear Mr. Tosatto:

I am writing you in your capacity as Head of Delegation for the upcoming Ninth Regular Session of the Northern Committee (NC9) of the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish (HMS) Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. At its June 2013 meeting the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) reviewed reports from its Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) as a basis for developing recommendation for NC9. These recommendations are directed towards the development of a precautionary management framework for North Pacific albacore tuna, which the NC intends to complete next year.

The attached report "Pacific Fishery Management Council General Recommendations for the North Pacific Albacore Precautionary Management Framework Proposed by the Western and Central Pacific Commission Northern Committee" combines background information and recommendations from the aforementioned advisory bodies with discussion by the Pacific Council and describes the rationale for the Council's recommendations. In brief these recommendations are:

- The management framework should enumerate its objectives, including recognition of the importance of recreational fisheries for North Pacific albacore and the need for improved data collection at the international level.
- The management framework should include both target and limit biological reference points to guide management responses with respect to excessive fishing mortality (overfishing) and reduced stock status (depletion), in the event they occur.
- Fishing mortality (F) based biological reference points should be defined with respect spawning potential ratio (SPR) and not in terms of historical stock biomass as with the current interim reference point, given uncertainty about the stock-recruit relationship and stock size.

- Biomass based reference points, used to determine stock status, should be chosen with care, recognizing uncertainty in estimates of stock biomass.
- A simple linear sliding scale harvest control rule—similar to the framework elucidated in the Pacific Council’s Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species—should be considered; under this type of harvest control rule fishing mortality is proportionately reduced when stock biomass falls below the target to allow it to rebuild to the target.
- Catch-based management measures are favored over effort-based measures, because catch can be more directly related to fishing mortality and easier to monitor; however, catch-based measures could trigger a variety of issues related to the allocation of fishing opportunity.

Also attached is a preliminary draft proposal for a precautionary management framework document, for consideration by the U.S. delegation to advance at the upcoming NC meeting under its agenda item 2.3.2. We feel it is important for the U.S. to advance something at the NC9 meeting, so as to move forward in accordance with the 2013 NC Work Program; this represents an early seed effort for a focus document that would be expected to evolve as discussions dictate.

We look forward to discussing these recommendations with the delegation during the anticipated pre-meeting conference call. Ms. Marija Vojkovich and Dr. Kit Dahl, will be attending NC9 to further advance the concepts within the U.S. delegation and assist in the development of NC consensus as appropriate.

Finally, I want to emphasize that the Pacific Council wishes to continue to play a significant role as the precautionary management framework for North Pacific albacore is further developed by the NC over the next year or so.

Sincerely,



D. O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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Attachments: Pacific Fishery Management Council General Recommendations for the North Pacific Albacore Precautionary Management Framework Proposed by the Western and Central Pacific Commission Northern Committee Preliminary Draft Precautionary Management Framework

C: Council Members

Mr. Russell Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, NOAA

Mr. Bill Gibbons-Fly, DOS OMC

HMSMT Members

HMSAS Members

Dr. Owen Hamel, SSC Chair

SSC HMS Subcommittee Members

Mr. Tom Graham, U.S. delegation

Mr. Mark Helvey, U.S. delegation

Dr. Samuel Pooley, U.S. delegation

Dr. Gerard DiNardo, U.S. delegation

Dr. Jon Brodziak, U.S. delegation

Ms. Erika Carlsen, U.S. delegation

Dr. Steve Teo, U.S. delegation

Mr. Svein Fougner, U.S. delegation

Mr. Peter Flournoy, U.S. delegation

Mr. Eric Olson, U.S. delegation

Mr. Adam Bloomquist, U.S. delegation

Mr. David J Gershman, U.S. delegation

Ms. Marija Vojkovich, U.S. delegation

Ms. Kitty Simonds, U.S. delegation

Mr. Sean Martin, WPFMC

Mr. Manny Duenas, WPFMC

Mr. Eric Kingma, WPFMC

Mr. Paul Dalzell, WPFMC