

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON
RECOMMENDATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL FISHERY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) discussed recommendations that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) might consider making to the U.S. delegations to the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee and to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). The HMSMT recommends the Council postpone making any recommendations on bigeye and yellowfin tuna management measures until September after the updated stock assessments for these species are available.

The HMSMT discussed the possibility that the U.S. delegation propose adoption of a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) management framework for the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) tuna purse seine fishery at the upcoming IATTC meeting. The HMSMT believes that this may be a more effective method to manage capacity and catch in the purse seine fleet compared to the current vessel capacity limits and time/area closures. The IATTC has dedicated port sampling programs in all of the major EPO offloading ports that would make tracking a TAC-based management framework feasible. The HMSMT recommends that the U.S. delegation to the IATTC move forward with developing a proposal for a TAC.

The HMSMT supports the adoption of biological reference points and effective conservation measures for bluefin tuna in the IATTC and WCPFC. Currently, no biological reference points are agreed upon for bluefin tuna; however, with respect to all potential reference points examined by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the Northern Pacific's (ISC), the fishing mortality rate appears to exceed that which would support maximum sustainable yield. There was a one-year conservation measure adopted by the WCPFC in December 2009 (CMM 2009-07); however, the HMSMT believes that its effectiveness is compromised by the substantial exemptions that were included and the limited timeframe of the measure. The HMSMT recommends that the U.S. delegation to the Northern Committee propose a more effective and comprehensive conservation measure for bluefin tuna. The Council might also consider recommending the U.S. pursue participation in the bluefin tuna meeting scheduled for August 30, 2010 in La Jolla, CA, between Japan, Mexico, and the IATTC Secretariat to discuss potential management measures for bluefin tuna in the EPO.

The HMSMT notes that the ISC Albacore Working Group will meet in July to discuss potential biological reference points for use in albacore management. The HMSMT supports the concept of creating an ad-hoc committee as described in Attachment 1 of Agenda Item E.1.a. to review the results of the Albacore Working Group and other HMS issues that may arise prior to the September Council meeting.

Finally, with respect to U.S. proposals for conservation measures that are likely to be discussed at the upcoming IATTC meeting, the HMSMT recommends that the Council support proposals that would increase compliance with IATTC management measures; for example, the proposal to clarify and improve Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) vessel listing procedures. The HMSMT also recommends that the U.S. delegation advocate for more comprehensive data reporting and collection by members of the IATTC and WCPFC consistent with the U.S. requirements under National Standard 1 Guidelines.

In summary, the HMSMT recommends:

- Postponing bigeye and yellowfin tuna recommendations until after the updated stock assessments are released;
- The U.S. delegation to the IATTC develop a proposal for a TAC in the purse seine fishery;
- The U.S. delegation to the Northern Committee propose a more effective and comprehensive bluefin tuna conservation measure in the WCPFC;
- The United States pursue participation in the IATTC bluefin tuna meeting and move forward with a proposal for a bluefin tuna conservation measure in the IATTC;
- Creating an ad-hoc committee to review the results of the Albacore Working Group and other HMS issues that arise as a result of the ISC meeting;
- The Council support proposals that would increase compliance with IATTC management measures;
- The U.S. delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC advocate for more comprehensive data reporting and collection by members of the IATTC and WCPFC.

Table 1. Upcoming International HMS Meetings for 2010.

Date	Meeting	Location
July 6-9	ISC Pacific Bluefin Working Group	Nanaimo, Canada
July 12-13	ISC Albacore and Billfish Working Group	Victoria, Canada
July 15	ISC Shark Assessment Taskforce	Victoria, Canada
July 20-26	ISC Plenary annual meeting	Victoria, Canada
Aug. 10-19	WCPFC Scientific Committee	Nukualofa, Tonga
Aug. 30	Bluefin tuna meeting	La Jolla, CA
Aug. 30	IATTC Technical Meeting on Sharks	La Jolla, CA
Aug. 31-Sept. 3	IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee	La Jolla, CA
Sept. 7-10	WCPFC Northern Committee	Fukuoka, Japan
Sept. 17	U.S. General Advisory Committee to IATTC	La Jolla, CA
Sept. 23-Oct. 1	IATTC and AIDCP annual meetings	Antigua, Guatemala
Sept. 30-Oct. 5	WCPFC Technical and Compliance Committee	Pohnpei, Micronesia
December 6-11	WCPFC annual meeting	Honolulu, HI

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