

**The Commission for the Conservation and Management of
Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean**

**Northern Committee
Tenth Regular Session**

**Fukuoka, Japan
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**PRECAUTIONARY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR
NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE**

Introduction

At the Sixth Regular Session of the Northern Committee (NC), and consistent with *Article VI* of the WCPFC Convention, Canada submitted a paper (WCPFC-NC6-DP02) on the development of a precautionary approach based fishery management regime for the northern stocks. Building on this paper, NC7 agreed to a three-year work program to develop a precautionary approach based management framework for North Pacific (NP) albacore.

NC9 determined that it was best to delay discussions on the framework until the completion of the 2014 NP albacore stock assessment. In July 2014, the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) concluded that the NP albacore stock is “healthy and that current productivity is sufficient to sustain recent exploitation levels, assuming average historical recruitment in both the short and long term”. The ISC also provided further advice regarding candidate limit and target reference points.

Based on the advice from the ISC, the NC recommends the following precautionary management framework for NP albacore:

1. Management objective

The management objective for the NP albacore fishery is to maintain the biomass, with reasonable variability, around its current level in order to allow recent exploitation levels to continue and with a low risk of breaching the Limit Reference Point.

2. Biological Reference Points

Based on ISC’s 2014 stock assessment advice and following the hierarchical approach adopted by the Commission, NP albacore is to be treated as a Level 2 stock. The following is based on an average recruitment scenario:

- The Limit Reference Point (LRP) for this stock is established at $20\%SSB_{current F=0}$.

This LRP is consistent with the Annex II of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and recent WCPFC decisions on LRPs for the three tropical tuna species and South Pacific albacore, where $20\%SSB_{current F=0}$ was adopted. If this point is breached, management actions will be taken to return the stock to a predetermined level as outlined in the subsequent

section on Decision Rules. This LRP replaces the current interim limit which was previously established by the Northern Committee as Fssb-athl.

- The Target Reference Point (TRP) for this stock will be determined following a comprehensive analysis, if appropriate, under a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) approach as outlined in section 4 on Future Work. Historical fishing activity, anticipated fishing activity, and the source of increased fishing mortality will also be considered when evaluating a suitable TRP. Socio-economic factors, as per UNFA Article 6.3.c., will be further considered. The existing CMM for the stock (WCPFC 2005-03) establishes through limits on current effort an overall management regime for the stock.

3. Decision rules

NC recommends a management strategy for the stock that ensures that the risk of the biomass decreasing below the LRP is low.

LRP Rule: In the event that, based on information from ISC, the spawning stock size decreases below the LRP at any time, NC will, at its next regular session or intersessionally if warranted, adopt a reasonable timeline, but no longer than 10 years, for rebuilding the spawning stock to at least the LRP and recommend a CMM that can be expected to achieve such rebuilding within that timeline. NC will take into account historical fishing activity and the source of increased fishing mortality when developing management strategies to rebuild the stock, including in establishing effort reductions. NC will further consider socio-economic factors, as per UNFSA Article 6.3.c., as well as which NC members, if any, contributed to exceeding the LRP.

4. Future Work

This Framework shall be reviewed following the 2017 ISC stock assessment of NP albacore. In the interim, NC would support a MSE, if appropriate, for the stock to yield new information that would enhance the robustness of this framework. This framework shall be reviewed following the 2017 ISC stock assessment of NP albacore.