

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) was briefed by NMFS and Council staffs on the outcomes of July 2014 87th Inter American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Meeting and the Tenth Meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission Northern Committee (NC10), September 1-4. The HMSMT understands that the IATTC did not adopt a Resolution on Pacific bluefin for 2015 and beyond and therefore the IATTC will take this issue up at an extraordinary meeting in October 2014.

In preparation for the July 2014 Annual IATTC Meeting, the HMSMT submitted a June 2014 Supplemental Report under Agenda Item E.1.c detailing its recommendations to the Council based on the NMFS Pacific Bluefin Tuna Proposal. The HMSMT has no comment beyond what was presented under E.1.c regarding commercial catch limits of Pacific bluefin in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. The HMSMT would like to voice its continued support for U.S. fleet access to the Pacific bluefin tuna stock in order to maintain an economically viable commercial fishery.

[CS1]The HMSMT notes that a conservation and management measure for Pacific bluefin was agreed to at NC10, which is expected to be adopted for implementation at WCPFC11 (Agenda Item G.2.a, Supplemental Attachment 3). This measure is based on an evaluation of seven management scenarios per an NC request to the ISC (Table 1). Only scenario 6 showed stock rebuilding to the target biomass level included in the measure within 10 years with greater than a 50% probability assuming that current low recruitment continues (Table 2). This scenario includes for the WCPO, a 50% reduction of juvenile catches from the 2002-2004 average level and F no greater than F₂₀₀₂₋₂₀₀₄ and for the EPO, a 50% reduction of catches from 5,500 mt. The HMSMT notes that the assumption about continued low recruitment is pessimistic while on the other hand the rebuilding target, historical median spawning biomass, is low in relation to a limit reference point that may be appropriate for this stock (e.g., SSB_{20%}). The NC proposal is a multi-annual measure remaining in effect until stock rebuilding is achieved or the NC and WCPFC choose to adopt a replacement measure. If future recruitment is above expectations of low recruitment, the US may want to push for rebuilding to a higher biomass target.

Adoption of this measure by the NC is likely to influence discussions within the IATTC for a measure applicable to the EPO. Note that the scenarios modeled by the ISC do not include measures for EPO recreational fisheries. The HMSMT also notes that the NC proposed conservation measure includes an effort on fishing effort in paragraph 3(1), which may be redundant given the catch limit for juveniles (<30 kg) and paragraph 4 calling on members to “take every possible measure not to increase catches of Pacific bluefin tuna 30kg or larger from the 2002-2004 annual average levels...” The HMSMT recommends that any IATTC measure include only catch limits, as is the case for the current resolution (C-13-02). The HMSMT also recommends that an IATTC resolution be multi-annual and contain a compatible rebuilding target. However, given that the biomass target in the NC measure is low relative to commonly accepted reference points, the IATTC resolution should identify a compatible reference point as interim with the possibility of revisiting it depending on how quickly rebuilding proceeds.

The HMSMT also discussed the management framework for North Pacific albacore adopted by the NC. This management framework is generally consistent with the concept paper presented by the US at NC9, but does not contain some of the elements in the Council recommendation for a management framework made in 2013 (see [Agenda Item K.3.a, Attachment 2](#), March 2013. Conduct of a management strategy evaluation to further develop the proposal, including the identification of a target reference point, could be an opportunity to evaluate elements contained in the Council recommendation.

Table 1. Management scenarios analyzed by the ISC at the request of the NC.

| | | | WPO : Catch limit (left) and amount of catch reduction(right) of juvenile by country | | | | | | EPO : Quota by scenario | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|------|-------|-----|--------|---|-------------------------|---|-----------|---|
| | | | Japan | | Korea | | Taiwan | | EPO Comm | | EPO Sport | |
| | juvenile catch | adult catch | | | | | | | | | | |
| no1 | 85% of 2002-2004 average | | 6549 | 1156 | 1220 | 215 | - | - | 5500 | - | - | - |
| no2 | 85% of 2002-2004 average | 85% of 2002-2004 average | 6549 | 1156 | 1220 | 215 | - | - | 5500 | - | - | - |
| no3 | 85% of 2002-2004 average | 85% of 2002-2004 average | 6549 | 1156 | 1220 | 215 | - | - | 4675 | - | - | - |
| no4 | 85% of 2002-2004 average | | 6549 | 1156 | 1220 | 215 | - | - | 4675 | - | - | - |
| no5 | 75% of 2002-2004 average | | 5778 | 2004 | 1077 | 359 | - | - | 4125 | - | - | - |
| no6 | 50% of 2002-2004 average | | 3852 | 3852 | 718 | 718 | - | - | 2750 | - | - | - |
| no7 | 75% of 2002-2004 average | | 5778 | 2004 | 1077 | 359 | - | - | 4125 | - | - | - |

Table 2. Results for the future projections requested by NC9 under seven harvest scenarios and assuming three future recruitment conditions where $SSB_{\text{recent},F=0}$ is calculated using the most recent ten year's recruitment (2002-2011).

| NC9's scenarios | Future recruit level | | Within 10 years from 2014 | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------|---|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | 2014 - 2023 (10years) | From 2024 | Probability achieving reference level at least one year | | | | |
| | | | 62KT (10%SSB0) | 93KT (15%SSB0) | 124KT (20%SSB0) | 155KT (25%SSB0) | Historical Median(43KT) |
| No.1 | Low | Low | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 4% |
| | Low | Middle | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 4% |
| | Middle | Middle | 48% | 24% | 10% | 4% | 69% |
| No.2 | Low | Low | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 5% |
| | Low | Middle | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 5% |
| | Middle | Middle | 53% | 30% | 16% | 8% | 72% |
| No.3 | Low | Low | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 9% |
| | Low | Middle | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 9% |
| | Middle | Middle | 60% | 36% | 20% | 10% | 79% |
| No.4 | Low | Low | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% |
| | Low | Middle | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2% |
| | Middle | Middle | 48% | 27% | 13% | 5% | 64% |
| No.5 | Low | Low | 3% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 16% |
| | Low | Middle | 3% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 16% |
| | Middle | Middle | 70% | 43% | 22% | 10% | 87% |
| No.6 | Low | Low | 51% | 12% | 2% | 0% | 85% |
| | Low | Middle | 51% | 12% | 2% | 0% | 85% |
| | Middle | Middle | 96% | 83% | 61% | 38% | 99% |
| No.7 | Low | Low | 6% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 31% |
| | Low | Middle | 6% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 31% |
| | Middle | Middle | 77% | 49% | 26% | 13% | 92% |