



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
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DEC 29 2014

Mr. Edwin Ebusui, Acting Chair
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council
1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400
Honolulu, HI 96813

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Mr. Dan Hull, Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
605 West 4th Avenue, Suite 306
Anchorage, AK 99601-2252

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Dear Chairs Ebusui, Hull, and Lowman:

I am writing to inform you of the outcomes of the Eleventh Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC or Commission), held in Apia, December 1 - 5, 2014. By way of this letter, I would like to share NMFS' initial assessment of the regulatory actions that will be needed to implement the recent decisions of the Commission.

Conservation and management measure for tropical tunas

The Commission slightly modified the conservation and management measure for the tropical tunas, adopting CMM 2014-01 to replace CMM 2013-01. The high seas fishing effort limits for purse seine vessels that were in place for 2014 were extended through 2015. The Commission did not adopt any additional arrangements, so the fifth-month prohibition on the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs) by purse seine vessels that was contemplated in CMM 2013-01 will not go into effect in 2015. The measure was amended to include a section on the provision of data, which is applicable only to China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Chinese Taipei. Many provisions of this measure have already been implemented in U.S. regulations and NMFS intends to implement the outstanding applicable provisions under the authority of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (WCPFC Implementation Act).

Conservation and management measure for Pacific bluefin tuna

The Commission adopted a revised conservation and management measure for Pacific bluefin tuna, CMM 2014-04. The main provisions of the measure call for effort and catch limits in



fisheries that target Pacific bluefin tuna. These measures are applicable indefinitely. The United States does not have any vessels that target Pacific bluefin tuna, so NMFS does not intend to take any regulatory action to implement the revised measure. Since Pacific bluefin tuna is overfished, we encourage the Councils to continue to consider any recommendations necessary to address the rebuilding of this stock.

Conservation and management measure for sharks

The Commission adopted a conservation and management measure that establishes requirements for longline fisheries targeting tuna and billfish, and longline fisheries targeting sharks (CMM 2014-05). For the first category of fisheries, members must prohibit the use of wire branch lines and leaders or prohibit the use of shark lines, which are branch lines running directly off the longline floats or drop lines. For longline fisheries targeting sharks, members must develop management plans. NMFS will evaluate the need for regulations to implement this measure and issue regulations as needed under the authority of the WCPFC Implementation Act.

Other decisions

In addition to the measures described above, the Commission made a number of decisions that dealt with procedural and other matters that require no regulatory action by the United States. These decisions included extending the Commission's compliance monitoring scheme for another year (CMM 2014-07), revising the standards, specifications and procedures for the WCPFC Record of Fishing Vessels (CMM 2014-03), adopting a plan to develop harvest strategies for specific stocks and fisheries (CMM 2014-06), and updating the conservation and management for the Commission's vessel monitoring system to reflect its application in the northwest quadrant of the Convention Area (CMM 2014-02).

Sincerely,



Michael D. Tosatto
Regional Administrator

cc: William W. Stelle, Jr., Administrator, West Coast Region
James W. Balsiger, Ph.D, Administrator, Alaska Region
Ned Cyr, Ph.D, Acting Director, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
Cisco Werner, Ph.D, Director, Southwest Fisheries Science Center