

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) and Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel jointly received a briefing by Ms. Heidi Taylor (NMFS West Coast Region) on recent activities and management measures adopted by Regional Fishery Management Organizations. Key elements of this briefing are presented below.

At its December 2014 meeting, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) will consider the Northern Committee's (NC) recommendation for a Precautionary Framework for North Pacific albacore (Agenda Item I.2.a, Attachment 2, November 2014), which includes specification of the limit reference point and decision rules, as well as support for a management strategy evaluation (MSE). The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species (ISC) will conduct an MSE for North Pacific albacore. To initiate this process, the ISC has plans for a workshop in 2015 to bring managers, stakeholders, and scientists together to provide input for conducting the MSE. The HMSMT recommends that a representative of the Council participate in this workshop and subsequent activities to represent the Council's interests and report back to the Council and advisory bodies. The HMSMT would like to remind the Council of the relevant aspects of the HMSMT report regarding Albacore Precautionary Management Framework and MSE (Agenda Item E.1.c, Supplemental HMSMT Report, June 2014). Further, the HMSMT recommends addressing most elements of the MSE outlined in the U.S. proposal to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) on Candidate Target and Limit Reference Points and Decision Framework for North Pacific albacore (Agenda Item I.2.a, Attachment 4, November 2014). If the WCPFC adopts the NC's recommendation in December, then a limit reference point will be set; in this case, elements of the U.S. proposal regarding analyses of potential limit reference points should be omitted from consideration in the MSE. To promote compatible precautionary management approaches in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) and Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), the U.S. proposal also fostered collaborative efforts by scientists from the IATTC and ISC Albacore Working Group to develop the operating models and refine and review the results. For the same reason, the HMSMT recommends broad representation of scientists and managers from both the relevant entities in the EPO and WCPO.

The IATTC resolution (Agenda Item I.2.a, Supplemental Attachment 6, November 2014) for Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) sets commercial catch limits for 2015 and 2016. The HMSMT wishes to bring to the Council's attention the potential need to recommend an allocation scheme among user groups. In addition, the resolution requires semi-annual catch reporting for recreational fisheries and weekly reporting for commercial fisheries. A reporting system to accommodate this will need to be developed.