

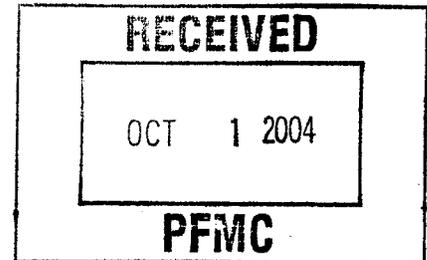


**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**

Agenda Item F.1.a
WPFMC Letter
November 2004

September 27, 2004

Mr Don McIsaac
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland
OR 97220-1384



Dear Don:

The Western Pacific Council would like to propose that this Council and the Pacific Council convene a joint meeting next year to focus on highly migratory pelagic species management. We believe that such a meeting is timely, since the final rule for your Pelagics Fishery Management Plan (FMP) was published this year, and because of the advent of the new fishery management commission for HMS in the Western and Central Pacific. Moreover, 2004 saw the first catch limitation for HMS to affect our fisheries, with the proposed rule for longline catch limits of bigeye tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, stemming from an IATTC resolution.

There are a range of issues of mutual concern to both Councils about pelagic fisheries. Resource limitation is a very real prospect for bigeye and yellowfin tuna, given the prognosis from recent stock assessments conducted by IATTC and the Standing Committee on Tuna and Billfish (SCTB). This may ultimately affect other pelagic fisheries apart from the longlining, particularly fisheries catching significant volumes of juvenile bigeye and yellowfin tunas. Meanwhile, protected species interactions continue to be a major issue, and requires us to constantly lift our game in terms of minimizing interactions. Other current hot-button issues include, fish aggregating devices (FADs), retention and landing of marlins, emerging US fisheries for high seas squid, and the continuity of US pelagic fisheries in the Pacific.

If you agree that it would be useful to convene a joint Council meeting focused on pelagics, we should establish a small steering committee to develop an agenda for the meeting and to discuss meeting logistics. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director