

## BIGEYE TUNA OVERFISHING RESPONSE

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) notified the Council that it must take action to address overfishing of bigeye tuna by June 14, 2005. A similar notification was given to the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (WPFMC). At the June 2005 meeting, the Council moved to begin work on an amendment to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS) as the proper response to address this issue. At the March 2006 meeting, NMFS recommended that before preparing the FMP amendment, the Council should first develop a position for consideration at the June 25–30 Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting. The Council could then develop an FMP amendment consistent with whatever action is taken by the IATTC relative to bigeye tuna.

At the March Council meeting, NMFS provided a Draft Analysis of Management Options for Development of a Plan to End Overfishing of Pacific Bigeye Tuna (Agenda Item J.2.a, Attachment 1, March 2006). This document was intended to provide the Council with the information needed to form a position that has the potential to influence any new conservation and management decisions adopted by the relevant international bodies governing bigeye tuna stocks in the eastern Pacific in future years. This draft paper was reviewed by the Council and its advisory bodies, recognizing that the Council would take final action to identify their recommendations at the April Council meeting. Based on this advice, the Council requested several clarifications in the description of the options, including how fleets would be defined for the purpose of the 1 percent exemption proposed under the options and measures applied to purse seine vessels. Similarly, it was recommended that the options be more explicit about whether proposed measures would apply to all U.S. vessels in the convention area (i.e., including Hawaii-based vessels) or just to West Coast vessels permitted under the HMS FMP. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 1 is a revised version of the Draft Analysis intended to address these concerns.

It was also noted that the WPFMC has taken action on an FMP amendment to address bigeye overfishing. One option not considered in the Draft Analysis presented in April would be to adopt the WPFMC recommendations, or substantially similar recommendations, as this Council's overfishing response. This would facilitate an analysis of the effects of that proposal on Pacific Council-managed fisheries and a comparison of that proposal with the other options presented in the Draft Analysis. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 2 excerpts sections from the WPFMC's Amendment 14 to their Pelagics FMP, addressing bigeye and yellowfin tuna overfishing. Section 4.2 describes the development of this amendment. Although the WPFMC took final action on this amendment at their May 31–June 2, 2005, meeting, subsequent information about the status of yellowfin tuna prompted them to delay transmittal so that a response could include this species. Section 8.0 describes their response for international fisheries, which is directly relevant to action by this Council. Although not directly applicable, Section 9.0, containing recommendations for domestic WPFMC fisheries, is included as supplemental information.

**Council Task:**

1. **Adopt Final Recommendations to the IATTC and provide further guidance, if necessary at this time, on the development of an FMP amendment.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 1: Analysis of Management Options for Development of a Plan to End Overfishing of Pacific Bigeye Tuna
2. Agenda Item G.1.a, Attachment 2: Excerpts from Draft Amendment 14 to the WPFMC Pelagics FMP

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. NMFS Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Recommendations to the IATTC

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