

## NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE TUNA STOCK ASSESSMENT

The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) held its plenary session July 25–30, 2007, in Busan, Korea. As part of its mandate to assess stocks and analyze fisheries occurring in the North Pacific, the ISC's Albacore Working Group finalized a stock assessment for North Pacific albacore tuna (Attachment 1 is the ISC plenary report. Printed excerpts are attached; the full report is available on CD-ROM and Web only. Attachment 2 is the Albacore Working Group Report, available on CD-ROM and Web only). The ISC assessment process involves collaboration by scientists from member nations on data contributions and model review but independent peer review is not part of the process. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee is scheduled to review the North Pacific albacore stock assessment and report to the Council. After evaluating the utility of the stock assessment, the Council is scheduled to consider recommendations for fishery management in the international arena.

The ISC and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) have entered into a memorandum of understanding on the provision of scientific advice to the WCPFC and its Northern Committee. The Northern Committee is responsible for developing conservation and management recommendations for stocks occurring north of 20° N latitude in the Pacific Ocean and comprises members situated in the area or fishing on such stocks. The Commission may only accept or reject recommendations made by the Northern Committee. If the Commission rejects such advice it returns the matter to the Northern Committee. In effect, the Commission may only make an up or down vote on Northern Committee recommendations and cannot independently modify them. Thus the Northern Committee plays an important role in the international management of highly migratory species stocks in the northwest Pacific (north of 20° N latitude and west of 150° W longitude). The Northern Committee holds its third regular session September 11–13, 2007, in Tokyo, Japan, which is the same time as the September Council meeting. Therefore, Council input on conservation and management measures for North Pacific albacore would have to be immediately transmitted to the U.S. delegation at the Northern Committee meeting in Tokyo if they were to affect the formulation of their recommendations. (Attachment 3 is an April 2007 request to reschedule the Northern Committee meeting and a reply from Bill Robinson, National Marine Fisheries Service Pacific Islands Regional Administrator.)

The Council may also wish to develop conservation and management recommendations for the U.S. delegation to the fourth regular session of the WCPFC, scheduled for December 3–7, 2007, at this time. One of the Commissioner seats is designated for a Pacific Council member. Ms. Marija Vojkovich is being considered for Presidential appointment to this seat. Agenda Item B.1.a, Attachment 2, preliminary November Council meeting agenda, shows an agenda item to further refine recommendations to the WCPFC. This would be an opportunity to receive a report on the Northern Committee recommendations and comment on them in time for the December WCPFC fourth regular session, if the Council decides to keep this item on the November 2007 meeting agenda.

**Council Action:**

**Review North Pacific Albacore stock assessment and develop recommendations to the U.S. delegation at the Northern Committee meeting and/or the WCPFC fourth regular session.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 1: Report of the Seventh Meeting of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean Plenary Session, 25-30 July 2007, Busan, Korea (*Printed excerpts; full document on CD-ROM and Web only*).
2. Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 2: Report of the Albacore Working Group Workshop, ISC, November 28-December 5, 2006, Shimizu, Japan (*on CD-Rom and Web only*).
3. Agenda Item F.4.a, Attachment 3: Letter to Bill Robinson and reply on scheduling of the WCPFC Northern Committee meeting.
4. Agenda Item F.4.c, HMSMT Report.
5. Agenda Item F.4.c, HMSAS Report.

**Agenda Order:**

- a. Agenda Item Overview
  - b. Southwest Fishery Science Center Report
  - c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
  - d. Public Comment
  - e. **Council Action:** Review Stock Assessment and Develop Recommendations to the U. S. delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)
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Paul Crone

PFMC  
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