



NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Third Regular Session
11-13 September 2007
Tokyo, Japan

SUMMARY RECORD

1. The Third Regular Session of the Northern Committee took place at Tokyo, Japan, on 11th- 13th September 2007. The Meeting was attended by members from Canada, China, Cook Islands, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, United States of America, and Chinese Taipei. Observers from Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, and Vanuatu participated in the meeting. The Secretariat of the WCPFC also attended as did a representative of the secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA). The list of meeting participants is included at Attachment A.

AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF MEETING

Welcome

2. Masanori Miyahara, Chair of the Committee, opened the meeting.
3. On behalf of Japan, Akira Nakamae, Deputy Director-General of Fisheries Agency of Japan welcomed all participants. His welcome address was attached as Attachment B

Adoption of agenda

4. The draft provisional agenda, as amended, was adopted (Attachment C). The documents that supported the meeting are posted on the WCPFC website.

Selection of Chair

5. In accordance with Rule 8 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure, Masanori Miyahara of Japan was selected to be recommended to the Commission as the Chair of the Northern Committee for the next two regular sessions.

Meeting arrangements

6. The Chair briefed the Session arrangements for the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 2. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Report from the 7th International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean

7. The ISC Chairman, Gary Sakagawa, presented a report on the recent work and findings of the ISC including the outcomes of the seventh meeting of the ISC, at Busan, Korea, July 25-30, 2007, the report of which is available at www.ISC.ac.affrc.go.jp. He noted that the responsibilities of the ISC are for stocks north of the equator. Achievements included the successful convening of eight working group workshops, the completion of two full stock assessments (albacore and striped marlin), one updated stock assessment (Pacific bluefin tuna), planning for full stock assessments for Pacific bluefin tuna and swordfish by 2010 and completed administrative tasks including a revision of the ISC charter, the ISC/WCPFC MoU and finalizing the ISC Operations Manual.

North Pacific albacore

8. Max Stocker (Canada), chair of the ISC Albacore Working Group, presented an overview of the North Pacific albacore stock assessment (including ISC conservation advice) conducted in 2006 using the VPA-2BOX model and data from 1966-2005. A summary of his presentation is at Attachment D.

9. The USA queried the relationship between CPUE and biomass, noting that the assessment shows the biomass is the second highest of record but that CPUE is declining for all fisheries. Max Stocker explained the high biomass is a result of strong 2001 and 2003 year classes and that if current high fishing mortality is maintained biomass will decline. He also noted difficulty in explaining the retrospective pattern that fishing mortality was consistently under-estimated and that biomass was over estimated but hoped that the decision to use the forward projecting model stock synthesis II for future assessments should help reduce these uncertainties.

Pacific bluefin tuna

10. Yukio Takeuchi (Japan), summarized the activities of the ISC Pacific Bluefin Tuna Working Group (PBFWG) during 2006-2007. A summary of his presentation is at Attachment E.

North Pacific swordfish

11. Gary Sakagawa reported that there is no assessment available for swordfish in 2007 but that a major assessment is planned 2009. He reported that the Billfish WG is collaborating with the organizers of the World Fisheries Congress, which is scheduled for

Yokohama, Japan in 2008. The contribution will focus on stock structure and stock exchange.

North Pacific striped marlin

12. Before commencing his presentation Gary Sakagawa reminded the meeting of the research needs, particularly in relation to biological research, in respect of all stocks that fall under the mandate of the ISC. He noted that much of the current information on biological parameters is quite old.

13. A summary of Gary Sakagawa's presentation in relation to North Pacific striped marlin is at Attachment F.

14. In response to a question from the Chair, it was explained that it would require a 30-40% decrease in current fishing effort if reduction of the current fishing mortality of 0.72 to 0.44 or an equivalent biological reference point of F20% is targeted. In considering data gaps the Committee noted reports from the Commission's science service provider and data manager that distant water and offshore longline fleets consistently under-report billfish because it is mostly taken as by-catch and is not a target species.

15. The Committee recognized that striped marlin has not been designated as a northern stock. However, noting the result of the scientific assessment conducted by ISC, the Committee considered it appropriate to provide comments to the Commission in relation to this species.

Report of the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC3), 13-24 August 2007, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

16. The Northern Committee noted the draft summary report of the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee prepared by the Secretariat.

Conservation and management measures for the northern stocks

Pacific Bluefin

17. Recalling the commitment from the Second Regular Session of the Northern Committee in 2006, the Chairman invited CCMs provided reports on national-level actions that they had taken in response to the concerns about the status of the stock. Summaries of action included:

- Japan: Catches are mostly confined to the EEZ and it established an internal conference, supported by Government, to promote consultation between industry, scientists and administrators to improve data collection and discuss management options.
- Chinese Taipei: Reported that it is planning to improve data quality – including through an increase in the personnel dedicated to data collection from the fishery. The number of fishing vessels that ever caught pacific bluefin has declined.

- The Philippines: No Philippine flag vessels targeting Pacific bluefin although several vessels that might be targeting bluefin, and claiming Philippine flag, are currently under investigation.
- USA: Bluefin is not currently a major fishery for US fleets. It is taken opportunistically in purse seine fisheries for sardines throughout the year.
- Korea: Not a target species for Korean fleets. However, they are getting caught by purse seiners for mackerel mostly in coastal areas in southern part of Korean peninsula.

18. The Chairman noted that Mexico also supports a significant fishery for Pacific bluefin but does not participate in the Northern Committee. He suggested that the Secretariat write to IATTC and ask that the discussions of the Northern Committee in relation to Pacific bluefin be relayed to Mexico.

19. In relation to possible management options for Pacific bluefin, some were of the view that, as a precautionary measure, some effort limitation was required – even as a voluntary measure as an interim arrangement. Others considered that, as a full assessment of the stock was scheduled for 2008, consideration of any management action could be postponed until the results of that assessment were available without adverse implications for the stock. It was also noted that the ISC had recommended no increase in fishing mortality and some CCMs considered that the Northern Committee needed to be seen to be responding to this advice.

20. The Committee agreed to consider conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin at the Fourth Regular Session based on the results of stock assessment to be conducted in 2008. Until that time, the Committee advised its members to make best efforts, on a voluntary basis, not to increase the fishing mortality rate of Pacific bluefin (i.e. catch or effort), while requesting them to collect and submit to the ISC scientific data required for better stock assessment.

North Pacific Albacore

21. The Northern Committee recalled the obligation described in Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) 2005-03 for CCMs not to increase fishing effort for North Pacific albacore. The Chairman invited CCMs provided reports on national-level actions that they had taken in response to this commitment. Summaries of action included:

- Japan: North Pacific albacore is taken by purse seine, longline and pole and line fleets which are subject to strict capacity and other controls. Japan noted that the catch of these fleets is declining.
- Chinese Taipei: Consistent with the advice of the ISC Chinese Taipei reported it is constraining fishing effort to 2004 levels.
- USA: Albacore is taken in surface troll fisheries and the Hawaiian longline fishery both of which are closely monitored. Research effort is underway to obtain an accurate measure for current effort in these fisheries.
- Korea: Albacore is not a target species for Korean fleets. It is taken by longliners

as a by-catch.

- Canada: reported that its troll fleet is 95% compliant with the logsheet reporting requirements for this fishery and that recent effort has decreased from 220 to 171 vessels.
- Vanuatu: reported that less than 40 Vanuatu flag longliners are active in this fishery and that there is no intention to increase vessel numbers.

22. The Chair invited CCMs to participate in an informal discussion on reference points. This was in recognition of the decision at last year's meeting to adopt a biological reference point for North Pacific albacore at this year's meeting.

23. The subsequent informal discussion reflected on the ISC advice that spawning stock biomass for North Pacific albacore is estimated to be at the historically second highest and that in general catches are declining. It was also noted that current F is high relative to commonly used F reference points. On this basis it was questioned whether immediate management action for North Pacific albacore was necessary. The discussion also recalled that Annex II of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and Article 6 of the WCPF Convention require management action based on a determination of stock-specific reference points. In the light of concerns about the long term status of North Pacific albacore, particularly if the assessment proved to be overly optimistic in terms of the current status of this stock, some CCMs suggested that the ISC be requested to investigate alternative reference points for highly migratory fish stocks in the North Pacific including management strategies that take into account possible fishery impacts by gear type and areas that might be considered by fishery managers. It was noted that the report of the ISC Albacore WG in 2005 outlined the data requirements and processes associated with biological reference points. This could provide a basis for a "road map" for further consideration of biological reference points and management strategies for North Pacific stocks.

24. Taking account of the ISC 7 report, the Committee agreed to maintain the existing CMM requiring CCMs not to increase fishing effort for north Pacific albacore. The Committee discussed the reference points for this stock, but did not reach conclusion. It was agreed to continue the discussion on reference points in future NC meetings.

25. The USA suggested the introduction of a concept of an interim management objective for this stock, that is in essence to maintain the spawning stock biomass (SSB) in the range of its historical fluctuation until the reference points are established. The Committee welcomed this US suggestion and urged the concerned members to jointly elaborate the concept inter-sessionally and present a concrete proposal to NC4. ISC is requested to present its view on this concept to NC4. It was noted that it was desirable for the concerned members to complete such inter-sessional work before the ISC Albacore WG meeting in February 2008 so that it can review specifics of the concept. Close cooperation is required with IATTC on this matter.

26. To improve stock assessment and fishery management of north Pacific albacore, the

Committee further agreed to request ISC to provide information and advice on data availability and the impact of any data limitations on the stock assessment, as well as to produce a so-called “Kobe chart” for this stock.

North Pacific Swordfish

27. The Northern Committee considered no action was required at this Session in respect of North Pacific swordfish.

Conservation and management measures for other species

Bigeye and yellowfin tuna

28. The Northern Committee noted that discussion on these species would be taken up elsewhere in the Commission.

Sharks

29. The Committee noted that discussion on sharks would be taken up elsewhere in the Commission and will discuss implementation of CMMs, if appropriate, at the next Session of the Committee.

Seabirds

30. The Committee noted that discussion on seabirds would be taken up elsewhere in the Commission and will discuss implementation of CMMs, if appropriate, at the next Session of the Committee.

Status of striped marlin as a northern stock

31. Noting the decision of the Scientific Committee to defer the consideration on the designation of striped marlin as a “northern stock” on the basis of lack of information on the distribution of the biomass of this stock the Northern Committee decided to re-new its request to the Commission for the Scientific Committee to review available information that might support the designation of striped marlin as a “northern stock”.

Conservation considerations for striped marlin

32. Based on the recent stock assessment, there is a clear need for the Commission to pay close attention to North Pacific striped marlin and to urgently consider appropriate management action. Although striped marlin has not yet been formally designated a northern stock, it is clearly an important resource in the northern portion of the Convention Area – it is caught primarily in the northern fisheries that the members of the Northern Committee have a special interest in.

33. The Northern Committee considered appropriate management strategies for striped marlin and acknowledged that since it is mostly taken incidentally, strategies aimed at reducing the catchability of striped marlin in fisheries directed at other species may be appropriate.

34. Taking into account the recommendation made by ISC7 to reduce the fishing mortality rate on striped marlin, the Northern Committee advises its members to make every effort, on a voluntary basis, not to increase their respective current fishing mortality rates (i.e. catch or effort) on striped marlin in the North Pacific, and to reduce them to the extent practicable. This voluntary undertaking should continue until the Commission agrees upon effective conservation and management measures for striped marlin in the North Pacific. At future meetings of the Northern Committee, members will review the efforts made under this voluntary program.

35. NC2 recommended that the Commission designate striped marlin as a northern stock based on the stock being mostly in the area north of 20 degrees north latitude.

36. The WCPFC Scientific Committee reviewed a paper prepared by the Secretariat illustrating the northern distribution of the stock based on catch data. However, the SC could not reach a conclusion with respect to the designation of striped marlin as a northern stock, citing the lack of evidence that the stock biomass lies mostly north of 20 degrees north.

37. NC3 discussed the SC3's finding regarding striped marlin and reaffirmed its recommendation for the Commission to seek advice from the Scientific Committee that striped marlin be designated a northern stock. The ISC is invited to provide relevant information to the Scientific Committee in relation to this matter.

38. To begin the process of developing effective conservation and management measures for striped marlin in the North Pacific, the NC3 recommends that the Commission task the Northern Committee to convene a working group that would include fisheries managers, gear technology experts and fishermen, as well as scientists. Among other things, this working group would be tasked with the following:

- Examine the effects of fishery management measures already taken or to be taken by members, including reductions in fishing capacity and fishing effort in fisheries that catch striped marlin, on catches and fishing mortality rates of striped marlin.
- Examine existing fisheries data to characterize spatial and temporal patterns of striped marlin catches and catchability.
- Examine fish behavior and fishing technologies in order to identify potential strategies to reduce striped marlin catches without unduly affecting catches of target species and while minimizing adverse impacts on fishermen.

- Identify potential research, including experimental designs, that would be useful in identifying effective ways to reduce the catchability of striped marlin in various fisheries.
- Consider any possible way to further encourage fishermen to work with scientists and managers to develop and comply with practical measures in a cooperative and forward-looking manner.

39. To assist the working group in performing these tasks, members of the Northern Committee and ISC should provide any relevant fisheries data and research, as well as descriptive information about their fisheries that take striped marlin that reveal as much detail as possible on gear configurations and fishing patterns and practices.

40. This working group is tasked with completing its work in time for presentation at the 2008 Scientific Committee and Northern Committee meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 3. DATA

Review of the status of data and data gaps for northern stocks

41. Gary Sakagawa reminded the Committee of the need for new research effort to generate additional biological data to help reduce some of the current uncertainties associated with stock assessments.

42. The Executive Director, Andrew Wright, noted information contained in the report of ISC7 and the Statistics Specialist Working Group at the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee in August relating to data and data gaps. ISC7 had identified current gaps to include; reporting coverage for some domestic fleets, mis-identification of species, particularly billfish species, the length of time (3 years in some cases) some CCMs required to compile data, the challenges posed by IUU fishing and the absence of data concerning those operations, a focus on target stocks and limited data collection effort for non-target stocks and lack of information on discards reporting. He noted also the appeal from the Scientific Committee for improved collaboration with industry in research activities, particularly among offshore and distant water longline fleets through the return of tags.

43. The Committee's attention was drawn to the data coverage paper prepared by the Commission's data manage service provider, SPC-OFP, that identified specific gaps in the Commission's data discussed at the Scientific Committee meeting. The paper, WCPFC-SC3-ST SWG IP3, is available on the Commission's website. Although the Committee noted the need to adopt a holistic and balanced approach to addressing the full range of data gaps that currently exist it was noted that these data gaps, in one form or another, apply to northern stocks. It was noted that the Scientific Committee has recommended that the Secretariat establish a service on its website that profiles data gaps and provides a reporting schedule to assist CCMs meet their data reporting obligations to the Commission.

44. The Executive Director provided a summary table of data received from CCMs in response to CMM-2005-03. While the table would be refined in advance of the Third Regular Session of the Technical and Compliance Committee to ensure information was as complete as possible, the Northern Committee considered the table a useful record of data submission that should be provided to the Committee at its Regular Sessions to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of the Measure. The representative from the Cook Islands noted that it had submitted data as required but that the Commission was still developing procedures to process data submitted in differing logbook formats.

AGENDA ITEM 4. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Work Programme for 2008-2011

45. The Committee adopted the revised 2008-2012 work programme at Attachment G.

AGENDA ITEM 5. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

ISC

46. The Northern Committee noted with satisfaction the conclusion of the MoU between ISC and WCPFC.

IATTC

47. The Northern Committee reviewed the range of issues that was discussed at the First Consultation between the Secretariats of the IATTC and WCPFC, as provided for under the MoU. It was noted that there is significant potential for mutually beneficial collaboration on scientific and fisheries research and that, while information and data exchange should be promoted between the two Commissions, this could only occur once the appropriate protocols had been considered and approved by the two Commissions. The Committee noted particular sensitivities in relation to MCS information and data that would require careful consideration. The Committee noted a Second Consultation between the Secretariats of the two organizations was scheduled to coincide with the next annual session of WCPFC at Guam in December.

Proposed review of interim arrangements for scientific structure and function

48. The Northern Committee noted the proposed revised oversight arrangements and schedule for the review that was developed by the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee and that will be considered at the forthcoming annual session of the Commission in December.

AGENDA ITEM 6. OTHER MATTERS

Administrative arrangements for the Committee

Secretariat functions and costs

49. The proposal from Japan to establish secretariat services for the Northern Committee was deferred to the next annual session of the Northern Committee.

Rules of Procedure

50. Noting comments tabled by Japan, the Northern Committee deferred further consideration of Rules of Procedure for the Northern Committee to a future session of the Committee.

Next meeting

51. The Fourth Regular Session of the NC will meet 9-11 September 2008 at Tokyo, Japan.

Other business

52. The Committee was advised that the Commission received 2007 monthly catch data for Vanuatu flagged vessels on September 13, 2007 for the area north of 20 degrees north. The Executive Director noted that the Commission had also received operational data in various formats in August 2007. On this basis, the Committee granted provisional membership status to Vanuatu subject to review and approval by the members of the Committee of the data received from Vanuatu.

AGENDA ITEM 7. REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

Adoption of the report of the Third Regular Session of the Northern Committee and recommendations to the Commission

53. The Northern Committee adopted the Summary Report of its Third Regular Session.

AGENDA ITEM 8. CLOSE OF MEETING

Closing of the meeting

54. The meeting closed at 1100 h on Thursday 13 September 2007.



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NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Third Regular Session
11-13 September 2007
Tokyo, Japan

OPENING STATEMENT

Akira Nakamae
Deputy-Director General
Fisheries Agency of Japan

Mr. Chairman, Executive Secretary, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the government of Japan, let me welcome all of you to Japan and to the third meeting of the Northern Committee of WCPFC. It is our great pleasure to host this important meeting again. This year, our welcome extends particularly to the delegation from the new member of the Committee.

As you are fully aware, the function of the Northern Committee is to make recommendations on the formulation of conservation and management measures in respect of stocks which occur mostly in the North Pacific. Therefore, sustainable management of the northern stocks will be the main topic of the discussion of this week. Since the Northern Committee consists of the coastal as well as fishing members in the region, I am convinced that the development of sound and rational recommendations balancing the establishment of a stronger stock management and the sustainable development of fisheries will further increase the value of the Committee in the WCPFC framework.

I was informed that there was a substantial discussion at the Commission last year in Samoa regarding the area of the competence of the Northern Committee. Naturally, the activities of the Northern Committee should be conducted in accordance with the Convention. Having said so, it should be well remembered that the reason why the Northern Committee is established is that the characteristics of the environment and fisheries of the Pacific Ocean north of 20 degree north are very different from those of the rest of Pacific. Therefore, I strongly believe that the Northern Committee should make proactive inputs, following active discussions, in order for the Commission to adopt conservation and management measures taking well account into the situation of the region.

Needless to say, the North Pacific is *the* most important ocean for Japanese tuna industry. Therefore, it is obvious that the Japanese government is committed to the establishment of sustainable tuna fisheries in the region through active participation for the Northern Committee. Japan believes that further vitalization of the Northern Committee is essential to do so, thus Japan has dispatched Dr. Ziro Suzuki to the Secretariat to assist its activities regarding the Northern Committee, and Japan is prepared to discuss further the issues regarding the function of Secretariat this week. I seek for your positive consideration of the Japanese proposals. Let me also confirm in this occasion that Japan is prepared to host the future Northern Committee meetings as well.

Since the area of application of the Northern Committee is rather limited, all of the issues are practical, not theoretical, to everybody here and I have no doubts that this meeting of the Northern Committee will be as lively as the previous ones. Since the recommendations of the Northern Committee can be adopted only by consensus, all participants must make their best efforts to achieve resolutions which are acceptable and implementable to all stakeholders, by understanding each other with cooperative spirits and wider perspective.

In closing, let me make my best wishes for you to have a fruitful 3-day meeting and a comfortable and enjoyable stay in Japan.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.



NORTHERN COMMITTEE
Third Regular Session
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AGENDA

WCPFC/NC3/03 Rev.1
11th September 2007

AGENDA ITEM 1. OPENING OF MEETING

- 1.1 Welcome**
- 1.2 Adoption of agenda**
- 1.3 Selection of Chair**
- 1.4 Meeting arrangements**

AGENDA ITEM 2. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

- 2.1 Report from the 7th ISC**
- 2.2 Report of the Third Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC3)**
- 2.3 Conservation and management measures for the northern stocks**
 - 2.3.1 Northern Pacific Bluefin**
 - 2.3.2 North Pacific Albacore (CMM-2005-03)**
 - 2.3.3 North Pacific Swordfish (CMM-2006-03)**
- 2.4 Conservation and management measures for other species**
 - 2.4.1 Bigeye and yellowfin tuna (CMM-2006-01)**
 - 2.4.2 Sharks (CMM-2006-05)**
 - 2.4.3 Seabirds (CMM-2006-02)**
- 2.5 Status of striped marlin as a northern stock**
- 2.6 Conservation considerations for striped marlin**

AGENDA ITEM 3. DATA

- 3.1 Review of the status of data and data gaps for northern stocks**

AGENDA ITEM 4. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

- 4.1 Work Programme for 2008-2011**

AGENDA ITEM 5. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

- 5.1 ISC**
- 5.2 IATTC**
- 5.3 Proposed review of interim arrangements for scientific structure and function**

AGENDA ITEM 6. OTHER MATTERS

6.1 Administrative arrangements for the Committee

6.1.1 Secretariat functions and costs

6.1.2 Rules of Procedure

6.2 Next meeting

6.3 Other business

AGENDA ITEM 7. REPORT TO THE COMMISSION

7.1 Adoption of the report of the Third Regular Session of the Northern Committee and recommendations to the Commission

AGENDA ITEM 8. CLOSE OF MEETING

8.1 Closing of the meeting

Summary of presentation in relation to North Pacific albacore

1. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) shows fluctuations around the modeled time series average (1966-06) 100,000 mt. The 2006 stock assessment indicated that SSB increased from 73,500 mt (2002) to 153,300 mt (2006) and is projected to increase to 165,800 mt in 2007. The increase is attributable to strong year classes in 2001 and 2003. The estimated spawning stock size in 2006 of 153,300 mt is approximately 53% above the overall time series average (1966-2005). Projections (2007-20), using an average productivity of 27.75 million fish, and F equal to 0.75 (average 2002-2004), indicate that the SSB will reach equilibrium by 2015 at 92,600 mt (90% CI=62,700-129,300 mt).
2. The population is being fished at roughly $F_{17\%}$ (i.e., $F_{2002-2004} = 0.75$). This result is similar to the 2004 assessment. F_{cur} (0.75) is high relative to commonly used F reference points. The Albacore WG had expressed concern at the decline in total albacore catch since 2002. As a result, ISC recommended:

“Previous scientific advice, based on the 2004 stock assessment, recommended that current fishing mortality rate (F) should not be increased. It was noted that management objectives for the IATTC and WCPFC are based on maintaining population levels which produce maximum sustainable yield. Due to updating, and improvements and refinements in data and models used in the 2006 stock assessment, it is now recognized that F_{cur} (0.75) is high relative to most of the F reference points (Table 1). On the other hand, the same analysis indicates that the current estimate of the SSB is the second highest in history but that keeping the current F would gradually reduce the SSB to the long-term average by the mid 2010s. Therefore, the recommendation of not increasing F from current level ($F_{cur}(2002-2004)=0.75$) is still valid. However, with the projection based on the continued current high F the fishing mortality rate will have to be reduced. The degree to which, when and how reductions should occur will depend on which reference points are selected and the desired probability and practicability of success of attaining these reference points in a time frame to be agreed. The ISC requires additional guidance on these issues from the management authorities in a timely manner to work further on these issues.”

Table 1. Results from equilibrium analysis of biological reference points (BRP) for North Pacific albacore associated with Model D1: (a) candidate target and limit reference points; (b) corresponding fishing mortality rates (F , yr-1); (c) current F (2002-04) relative to target F or limit F reference points; (d) MSY proxy or equilibrium catch (1,000 mt); and (e) SSBMSY proxy or equilibrium SSB (1,000 mt). The current F (0.75) reflects the fully-selected F (observed for age groups 8 and 9+) from the mean (geometric) of F -at-age estimates from 2002-04. All catch and SSB estimates are based on the assumption of constant recruitment of 27.75 million fish per year. All SSB statistics are based on the assumption of a 'May 1' reference spawning date.

Candidate Target Reference Points	Target F (yr^{-1})	Ratio of Current F To Target F	MSY Proxy (1,000 mt)	SSB_{MSY} Proxy (1,000 mt)
$F_{40\%}$	0.32	2.31	75	226
$F_{35\%}$	0.38	1.97	79	198
$F_{0.1}$	0.45	1.68	83	171
$F_{30\%}$	0.45	1.67	83	169
Candidate Limit Reference Points	Limit F (yr^{-1})	Ratio of Current F To Limit F	Equilibrium Catch (1,000 mt)	Equilibrium SSB (1,000 mt)
$F_{20\%}$	0.65	1.16	91	113
F_{Max}	2.07	0.36	100	10
$F_{SSB\text{-Min}}$	0.81	0.93	94	83
$F_{SSB\text{-}10\%}$	0.70	1.07	92	102
$F_{SSB\text{-}25\%}$	0.66	1.14	91	110

Summary of presentation in relation to Pacific bluefin

1. The total catch for this species indicated considerable fluctuation in the past between 8,500 mt in 1990 and 38,000 mt in 1956. Recent catches are relatively higher and the average for the past 5 years was about 22,000 mt. The last assessment was conducted in January 2006. ISC plenary indicated concerns on several uncertainties of the assessment results.
2. In order to answer these concerns, a data preparatory meeting was held in May 2007, and comprehensive data reviews for various fisheries, mostly in the western Pacific. WG members also promoted biological studies, in particular, the growth of older fish and data review for various fisheries.
3. Another meeting was held in July 2007 in Korea. In this meeting fishery information with regards to the strength of the 2001 year class (which would have consisted of the major part of adult stock) was investigated using the available size data. Consequently, the future prospect of this stock appears to be less optimistic, though it was considered premature to draw any conclusion on this point.
4. The ISC plenary in July 2007 kept the same management advice as last year, that is: “Noting the uncertainty in the assessments, the ISC Plenary agreed with the WG recommendation that bluefin tuna fishing mortality should not be increased above recent levels as a precautionary measure.”
5. The next full stock assessment will take place in May 2008.

Summary of the presentation in relation to North Pacific striped marlin

1. Gary Sakagawa commenced his presentation for North Pacific striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*) with reference to the conservation advice from the ISC which is: “While further guidance from the management authority is necessary, including guidance on reference points and the desirable degree of reduction, the fishing mortality rate of striped marlin (which can be converted into effort or catch in management) should be reduced from the current level (2003 or before), taking into consideration various factors associated with this species and its fishery. Until appropriate measures in this regard are taken, the fishing mortality rate should not be increased.”

2. This advice was based on the work of the ISC Billfish Working Group’s North Pacific striped marlin stock assessment that was undertaken using the Stock Synthesis 2 model. He noted the movement of striped marlin between temperate and sub-tropical areas throughout its life. As a result it is difficult to describe the biomass distribution for this stock throughout its range. Two assessment model scenarios were developed to bound the uncertainty in the steepness of the stock recruitment relationship; these were i) the maternal effect scenario in which recruitment is governed by a Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment curve (steepness $h=0.7$) and ii) the environmentally-driven recruitment scenario in which recruitment varies about its mean ($h=1.0$). Yield- and spawning biomass-per recruit biological reference points and stock projections at $F_{40\%}$, $F_{20\%}$ and F_{Curr} (2001-2003) fishing mortality rates were calculated using the YPR and AGEPRO modules of the NOAA Fisheries Toolbox (<http://nft.nefsc.noaa.gov/>).

3. It was reported that spawning biomass has declined from around 40,000 mt in the early-1970s to about 5,000 mt in the early 2000s. Spawning biomass in 2003 was estimated to be 14-15% of the 1970 level depending upon model scenario. Recruitment estimates also exhibited a long-term decline since the 1970s. Recent average recruitment (1996-2003) is roughly one-half of the long-term average (1965-2003) under both model scenarios. Stock projections from 2004 through 2009 based on re-sampling the distribution of recent average recruitment indicate that both spawning biomass and landings will continue to decline if the current fishing mortality rate (average of $F_{2001-F2003}$) is maintained, regardless of model scenario.

4. Fishing mortality has increased more than three-fold, from roughly $F=0.20$ in the early 1970s to over $F=0.6$ in the early 2000s. The current fishing mortality rate exceeds the $F_{20\%}$ reference point by roughly 60% under both model scenarios. It was also noted that the current fishing mortality rate corresponds to maintaining only 9% of maximum spawning potential ($F_{9\%}$). The Billfish WG expressed concern that current catches are at record low levels.



NORTHERN COMMITTEE
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Work Programme for the Northern Committee
(as revised by the Third Regular Session)

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
1. Northern stocks a. Monitor status; consider management action	Review status and take action as needed for: ¹ North Pacific albacore	Consider interim management objectives and ISC advice Obtain scientific advice and make recommendations for reference points for NP albacore	Obtain and review a full assessment.			

¹ In the event that the Commission, in accordance with paragraph 5 of Annex I of the Commission Rules of Procedure, adds additional stocks, such as the northern stock of striped marlin, to the list of stocks understood to be “northern stocks”, this work programme will be revised to include periodic status reviews and consideration of management action for such stocks.

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
b. Data	Pacific bluefin tuna	Obtain and review the status of the stock based on provisional stock assessment from ISC. Review reports from CCMs on their domestic management measures, and consider management action	Obtain and review available stock assessment (ISC, w/ WCPFC data) and consider management action.	Obtain and review a full assessment .		
	Swordfish		Obtain and review complete assessment (ISC) and consider management action			
	Striped marlin (if agreed by the Scientific Committee and Commission).	Review outcomes of the WG to consider alternative management options. CCMs report on voluntary constraints in relation to fishing mortality rate (i.e. catch or effort)				
	Achieve timely submission of complete data needed for assessments, formulation of measures, and review of Commission decisions	CCMs participating in the NC submit complete data on fisheries for northern stocks to the Commission Encourage submission to Commission of PBF data from all CCMs and make available to ISC				
	Consider systems to validate catch data					
2. Non-target, associated, dependent species						
a. Seabirds	Consider appropriate	Develop recommendation for				

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	implementation of methods to minimize catch and mortality.	implementation of mitigation measures adopted by Commission and review implementation of CMM-2006-02 in the northern area.				
b. Sea turtles	Consider appropriate implementation of methods to minimize catch and mortality.	NC CCMs submit mitigation research results to the Commission, for compilation by Commission	Review mitigation research results and consider management action			
c. Sharks	Consider appropriate implementation for CMM-2006-05 in the northern area.	Review implementation for CMM-2006-05 in the northern area.				
3. Review effectiveness of decisions	Annually review effectiveness of conservation and management measures and resolutions applicable to fisheries for northern stocks	Review effectiveness of NP albacore measure (CMM 2005-03)	Review effectiveness of NP albacore measure (CMM 2005-03)			
4. Cooperation with other organisations						
a. ISC	Develop recommendations to Commission for requests to ISC for assessments, analyses, and advice in support of conservation and management measures Facilitate provision of data needed for assessments to					

Work areas	5-year objectives	1-year tasks				
	2008-2012	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
b. IATTC	ISC Following Article 22.4, consult to facilitate consistent management measures throughout the respective ranges of the northern stocks	Following paragraph 8 of CMM 2005-03, initiate consultation to maintain consistent measures for NP albacore				