

YELLOWFIN TUNA OVERFISHING

In 2007, Mr. Rod McInnis, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southwest Regional Administrator, notified the Council that the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) yellowfin tuna stock is subject to overfishing, requiring a Council response under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) Section 304(i) applicable to international overfishing. Based on this letter, the Council has until March 30, 2008, to (1) develop recommendations for domestic regulations to address the relative impact of U.S. fishing vessels on the stock, and (2) develop and submit recommendations to the Secretary of State and Congress for international actions to end overfishing and rebuild the stocks, recognizing the relative impact of foreign vessels and U.S. vessels.

The Council discussed this issue at their September 2007 meeting and received reports from the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) and Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS). In their September 2007 report the HMSMT stated that the current domestic regulations are satisfactory and no new regulations are needed to address overfishing by U.S. vessels. They also provided a range of international management measure recommendations.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) is the principal international body responsible for international management of EPO tuna stocks, including yellowfin. In 2007 the IATTC was unable to adopt a new resolution containing conservation measures for yellowfin and bigeye tunas to replace Resolution C-06-02, which expired at the end of 2007. They are scheduled to meet March 5–7, 2008, in La Jolla, California in order to again try to adopt a resolution with conservation measures. Attachment 1 is a proposal for conservation measures from the IATTC Secretariat for consideration at that meeting.

Attachment 2 is a staff white paper prepared to assist the Council in identifying recommendations they wish to make in order to satisfy the requirements of Section 304(i). With respect to recommendations for international actions, the paper identifies eight potential recommendations for the Council to consider as a basis for formulating their response. These possible recommendations are broader in scope than ideas previously considered by the Council, suggesting broader U.S. policy initiatives to be considered by Congress and the State Department for ending international overfishing.

Based on Council discussion and action at this meeting, letters will be drafted to NMFS, Congress, and the Department of State containing respectively, recommendations for domestic regulations and recommendations for international action.

Council Action:

Adopt final Council recommendations to address yellowfin tuna overfishing per MSA §304(i).

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 1: Document IATTC-77-04, Proposal for Conservation of Yellowfin and Bigeye Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.
2. Agenda Item C.2.a, Attachment 2: Potential Pacific Fishery Management Council Response to International Overfishing of Yellowfin Tuna: A Pacific Council Staff White Paper.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kit Dahl
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Recommendations to Address Yellowfin Tuna Overfishing

PFMC
02/22/08