

## UPDATE ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Since the June Council meeting two regional fishery management organization (RFMO) meetings of note have occurred, the 88th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meeting, June 29-July 3, in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and the 11th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee, August 31-September 2, in Sapporo, Japan. In addition, results from the Plenary Meeting of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC), July 15-20, Kona, Hawaii, inform decisions taken by the Northern Committee.

Attached NMFS Report 1 summarizes the outcomes of the IATTC meeting and other highly migratory species (HMS) related actions taken by NMFS.

The ISC's Albacore Working Group has been tasked with developing a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for North Pacific albacore tuna. Results from the MSE will help inform ongoing development of the precautionary management framework adopted by the Northern Committee in 2014. Attachment 1 excerpts the Working Group's initial thoughts on this MSE from their meeting report.

The U.S. submitted four proposals for consideration by the Northern Committee: 1) Evaluation of candidate harvest control rules for North Pacific albacore (Attachment 2), 2) Precautionary management framework for Pacific bluefin tuna (Attachment 3), 3) Rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin tuna (Attachment 4), and 4) Precautionary management framework for swordfish in the North Pacific Ocean (Attachment 5). Dr. Kit Dahl attended the Northern Committee meeting along with Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Council Chair, as a U.S. Commissioner representing the Pacific Council. They can report on meeting outcomes, as appropriate. Attachment 6 is the provisional annotated agenda for this meeting.

The Permanent and Advisory Committee (PAC) to the U.S. Section to the WCPFC is tentatively scheduled to meet October 14-15, 2015. The purpose of the PAC is for the U.S. government to solicit the views of stakeholders on issues to be addressed by the WCPFC. (The Twelfth Regular Session of the WCPFC is scheduled for December 3-8, 2015.) Council staff will attend the PAC as an ex-officio member and Ms. Lowman will attend as a Commissioner. The PAC meeting is an opportunity for the Council to provide preliminary input on U.S. positions for the WCPFC meeting in December.

NMFS Report 2 is a letter from William Stelle, Regional Administrator of NMFS West Coast Region, informing the Council that the North Pacific swordfish stock in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) is subject to overfishing. The boundary between this EPO stock and the Western and Central North Pacific stock, as shown in the current stock assessment, is defined by line running southwest from central Baja California, Mexico to the equator. The U.S. longline fishing vessels based out of Hawaii caught 4 mt in 2012, according to Federal logbooks; very little catch would have occurred from West Coast-based vessels. The majority of harvest, amounting to over 9,200 mt of the 9,910 mt in the EPO, was by longline vessels from Japan, Spain, China, Korea, and

Taiwan. According to Section 304(i) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Council has one year to develop recommendations for domestic regulations to address the relative impact of domestic fisheries on the stock and international measures to end overfishing and rebuild the affected stock.

The Council may wish to consider two additional international HMS issues. First, on August 11 NMFS issued a proposed rule (80 FR 48172, Attachment 7) aimed at leveling the international playing field with regard to marine mammal protection by establishing procedures and conditions for evaluating a harvesting nation's regulatory program for reducing marine mammal incidental mortality and serious injury in its export fisheries, to determine whether it is comparable in effectiveness to the U.S. regulatory program. A harvesting nation must have applied for and received such a "comparability finding" for its fisheries in order for fish and fish products from those fisheries to be imported into the United States. Comments on the proposed rule are due by November 9, 2015.

Second, On August 3 the National Ocean Council Committee on IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud (NOC Committee) published a Federal Register Notice (80 FR 45955, Attachment 8) seeking public input on draft principles for determining seafood species at risk of IUU fishing and seafood fraud ("at risk") and a draft list of "at risk" species developed using the draft principles. The deadline for providing comment is September 2, 2015.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Consider Reports on the 88th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the 11th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee.**
- 2. Comment on Proposed Rule (Attachment 7) and Notice (Attachment 8).**
- 3. Discuss International HMS Issues As Appropriate.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 1: Attachment 4 to the Report of the Albacore Working Group Workshop, 20-22 April 2015, National Research Institute of Far Seas Fisheries Shimizu, Shizuoka, Japan (Annex 8 to the Report of the Fifteenth Meeting of the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean).
2. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 2: Evaluation of Candidate Harvest Control Rules For North Pacific Albacore, WCPFC-NC11-2015/DP-01.
3. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 3: Precautionary Management Framework for Pacific Bluefin Tuna, WCPFC-NC11-2015/DP-02.
4. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 4: Rebuilding Plan for Pacific Bluefin Tuna WCPFC-NC11-2015/DP-03.
5. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 5: Precautionary Management Framework For Swordfish in the North Pacific Ocean, WCPFC-NC11-2015/DP-04.
6. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 6: Provisional Annotated Agenda, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee Eleventh Regular Session.
7. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 7: Proposed Rule to Revise Regulations to Implement the Import Provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).
8. Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 8: Notice Soliciting Public Input on Draft Principles for Determining Seafood Species at Risk of IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud.

9. Agenda Item G.1.a: NMFS Report 1, Update on International Activities.
10. Agenda Item G.1.a: NMFS Report 2, Letter from Will Stelle, WCR Regional Administrator to Dorothy Lowman, Council Chair, Notifying that EPO Swordfish is Subject to Overfishing.

Agenda Order:

- G.1 Update on International Issues Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Consider Action on International Issues as Appropriate, Including Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Activities

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08/14/15