

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETINGS WITH INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) continues to have concerns regarding the management process of HMS, particularly with regards to the transoceanic tunas, Pacific bluefin tuna, and North Pacific albacore. Currently management measures for these fish are implemented by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), primarily from information from models generated by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species (ISC) with a scoping of alternatives guided by the Northern Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). This process then results in recommendations by the Northern Committee, officially to the WCPFC and informally to the IATTC. The IATTC has its own science processes, but to date appears to have primarily relied upon the science processes of the WCPFC through its Northern Committee.

For several years it has been apparent that recommendations from the Council to the Northern Committee and the IATTC have suffered from timing issues. Council meeting schedules have evolved over the years to best serve the fisheries the Council manages. The spread of meetings by the Council reflect this with its annual schedule of meetings in March, April, June, September, and November. The key month for management of the transoceanic tunas occurs annually in June with the annual June meeting of the IATTC, which has usually preceded the June Council meeting. Further, HMS has not been heretofore been placed on the Council's April agenda, because of the pressing concerns of the other fisheries managed by the Council. Having HMS on the April agenda would provide some relief of this issue. However, some have noted that the April Council meeting may be also too far in advance of the IATTC June meeting to result in adequate improvement of Council recommendations to the IATTC, because of late availability of relevant science-based data.

The HMSAS urges the Council to open a process to review the timing of HMSAS attendance to the Council meetings to best facilitate input into the international meetings that affect the species management of the HMS Fishery Management Plan.

PFMC
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