

BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) specifies a biennial management cycle during which Council decision-making occurs at its June, September, and November meetings. The Council started this process at the June meeting for management changes in the next biennial period, beginning April 1, 2017. For this period, the Council tasked the HMS Management Team (HMSMT) to:

1. Make “housekeeping” changes to the HMS FMP to update or correct dated information.
2. With respect to harvest specifications, clarify maximum sustainable yield, optimum yield, and status determination criteria for management unit species in the HMS FMP and publish up-to-date values for these reference points in the Stock Assessment Fisheries Evaluation (SAFE) document. This process would dovetail with NMFS’ stock status determination process. Further, it could align the process of notifying the Council of stock status findings that trigger action under Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) sections 304(e) and 304(i) (describing Council obligations relative to overfishing and overfished determinations) with the Council’s biennial management cycle. The SAFE would also include updated fishery management unit species descriptions, including identifying both the Eastern Pacific Ocean swordfish stock and the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock to reflect the most recent (2014) stock assessment and distribution information for those two stocks.
3. Respond to the requests contained in the Center for Biological Diversity’s (CBD) petition for additional domestic actions regarding Pacific bluefin tuna that NMFS referred to the Council (Attachment 1 is NMFS’s detailed response to the petition).

The HMSMT met August 8-12, 2016, and worked on a draft HMS SAFE Report, mark-ups to the HMS FMP, a plan for aligning the biennial management process and NMFS’ status determination process, and draft recommendations for a Council response to the CBD bluefin petition for initial consideration at the September Council meeting. The attached report provides an overview of proposed changes to the FMP. The HMSMT will submit a supplemental report covering the additional issues listed here.

Agenda Item J.3, Attachment 2 is an August 17, 2016, letter from NMFS notifying the Council that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock of striped marlin (*Kajika audax*) is overfished and subject to overfishing. Per Section 304(i) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Pacific Council is obligated to respond to this determination. The Council must, within one year, develop and submit recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce for domestic regulations to address the relative impact of fishing vessels of the United States on the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock, if necessary, and develop and submit recommendations to the Secretary of State and Congress for international actions that will end overfishing on the stock.

Council Action:

Council Action: Consider Housekeeping Changes to the Fishery Management Plan, Harvest Specifications for Public Review, and Response to Petition for Rulemaking on Pacific Bluefin Tuna.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.3, Attachment 1: The National Marine Fisheries Service's Response to a Petition from the Center for Biological Diversity Requesting A Rulemaking For Pacific Bluefin Tuna.
2. Agenda Item J.3, Attachment 2: August 17, 2016, letter from William Stelle, Jr., to Chairman Pollard notifying the Council that National Marine Fisheries Service has determined that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean stock of striped marlin is overfished and subject to overfishing.
3. Agenda Item J.3.a, HMSMT Report.

Agenda Order:

- J.3 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Consider Adopting Harvest Specifications for Public Review, and Adopt Housekeeping Changes to the Fishery Management Plan

PFMC
08/25/16