

## SUPPLEMENTAL HMSMT REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

At their June 2017 meeting, National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region (NMFS WCR) staff briefed the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) on international management activities of potential concern to Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan (HMS FMP) fisheries. Key management issues addressed in the presentation included Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) and striped marlin. This report concerns issues regarding management of these two species, and also an Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) proposal to improve observer safety.

### **Striped Marlin**

As noted in the Situation Summary ([Agenda Item H.5](#)), the PFMC is required to provide recommendations regarding the status of the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean (WCNPO) stock of striped marlin by August in response to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) memo to the PFMC, dated August 17, 2016. As stated in the memo, the WCNPO stock is overfished and subject to overfishing. The stock is located west of 140° West Longitude, lying entirely outside of the U.S. West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). To address stock status, the PFMC is specifically required to develop and submit recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce for *domestic regulations* to:

- (1) address the relative impact of fishing vessels of the United States on the WCNPO stock, and
- (2) develop and submit recommendations to the Secretary of State and to Congress for international actions that will end overfishing on the WCNPO stock.

The HMS FMP and pursuant regulations prohibit the retention and landing of striped marlin by commercial fishing vessels. Additionally, the U.S. West Coast recreational landings for billfish are primarily striped marlin, but neither the U.S. West Coast EEZ nor fishing effort by the U.S. West Coast recreational fleet overlaps with the range of the WCNPO stock. For these reasons, it is unlikely that any commercial or recreational U.S. West Coast fishing vessels managed under the HMS FMP catch fish from the WCNPO stock, as stated in the NMFS memo.

**Regarding Recommendations for International Measures:** The current WCPFC Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for this stock ([CMM 2010-01](#)) required each member nation with vessels fishing in the WCPFC Convention Area north of the equator to make a 20 percent catch reduction from the highest catch between 2000 and 2003. Additionally, the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (WPFMC) has recommended an annual international catch limit of 3,600 mt to be set by the WCPFC and an annual 500 mt limit for members catching less than 500 mt of striped marlin annually.

Using the above catch scenario from CMM 2010-01, projections of spawning stock biomass (SSB) were conducted in the most recent [stock assessment](#) by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) Billfish Working Group in 2015.

Table 1. shows projected levels of  $SSB_{2020/2015}$  based on stochastic resampling of recruitment levels from different time periods (low=2007-2011, medium=1994-2011, high=1975-2011).

Table 1. Projected  $SSB_{2020/2015}$  using catch scenario from CMM 2010-01 (80% of average 2000-2003 catch).

| Recruitment scenario | 5th Percentile | 25th Percentile | 50th Percentile | 75th Percentile | 95th Percentile |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Low (2007-2011)      | 0.87           | 0.97            | 1.09            | 1.19            | 1.54            |
| Medium (1994-2011)   | 1.19           | 1.31            | 1.44            | 1.7             | 2.06            |
| High (1975-2011)     | 1.39           | 1.71            | 2.31            | 3.13            | 4.4             |

Those projections showed that CMM 2010-01 rebuilding targets were met under most scenarios, with the exception of under low recruitment where the rebuilding targets were not met in 5th and 25th percentiles (gray-shaded cells in the table). These results do not necessarily indicate whether Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) guidelines for a 10-year rebuilding period are met.

**Recommendation:** Taking all of this into account, the HMSMT recommends the PFMC include the following statement in its response to the status determination notice:

The PFMC notes that there is no known impact of U.S. West Coast fishing vessels on the WCNPO stock of striped marlin, which is overfished and subject to overfishing. As stated in the August 17, 2016, status determination memo from NMFS to the PFMC, all known U.S. fishing on the WCNPO stock of striped marlin is under the jurisdiction of the WPFMC. Due to the lack of impacts from U.S. West Coast vessels, the PFMC recommends no new domestic regulations.

Note: In the HMSMT Report on Amendment 4 ([June 2017 H.2.a](#)) this stock is not identified as a stock from which U.S. West coast vessels made catches during 2006-2015.

### **Potential U.S. Proposals to the IATTC**

#### ***Pacific Bluefin Tuna***

The team discussed the draft US proposal to the IATTC for a second rebuilding target for PBF ( $20\%SSB_{current, F=0}$ , where current is defined as the 10 most recent years in the stock assessment) to be achieved by 2030 with at least 60 percent probability (see Agenda Item H.5.a Supplemental NMFS Report 2, page 10). A second rebuilding target is supposed to be discussed at the joint WCPFC /IATTC meeting and adopted at the concurrent Northern Committee Meeting (August

28-September 1). The HMSMT believes the US proposed second target is a reasonable approximation of  $B_{MSY}$  and thus would be consistent with the harvest specification framework described in Chapter 4 of the HMS FMP.

### *Observer Safety*

The HMSMT strongly supports any measures that improve observer safety. The HMSMT recommends the PFMC recommend to the U.S. delegation to the IATTC to take a strong position in favor of this proposal.

PFMC  
06/13/17