

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (HMS)

This report reviews the outcomes of the following three meetings that occurred in Fukuoka, Japan:

- Catch Documentation Scheme Technical Meeting: September 3, 2018.
- Joint Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) - Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Working Group: September 4-6, 2018.
- NC to the WCPFC September: 4-7, 2018.

Documents pertaining to all three meetings may be found at the [NC14 website](#); in particular, there were proposals on Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) by [Japan](#) and [Korea](#). The U.S. delegation was comprised of representatives from industry, non-governmental organizations, the Pacific Fishery Management Council, and NMFS (both the Pacific Islands Regional Office and West Coast Region).

Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Technical Meeting

Members of the NC participated in this meeting. It was agreed that this meeting, and any future CDS meetings, would be under the umbrella of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group (Joint WG). Mexico, who understood this meeting to be part of the NC and not the Joint WG, would participate in future CDS meetings. Although the IATTC has not had detailed discussions on CDS, it was acknowledged that the participation by members who catch, export, or import PBF should participate in discussions that may lead to the development of a CDS on PBF. Participants discussed the questions posed in [a paper](#) provided by Japan and a summary report will be made available. The next CDS meeting will be one day and held in conjunction with the next Joint WG meeting.

Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group / Northern Committee

The Joint WG was co-chaired by Dorothy Lowman and Masa Miyahara, and, in addition to members from the NC, representatives of Mexico and the EU were also present. The NC meeting was chaired by Masa Miyahara. The Joint WG did not recommend any increases in catch for 2019 at this time. The Joint WG recommended that the NC request the ISC provide 2019 updated abundance indices, including recruitment, and perform projections on eight scenarios (Table 1) which accommodate Korea's request for an increase in catch (see [Korea's NC proposal on PBF](#)). The Joint WG also recommended that decisions for increasing catch during the next meeting would be based on the results of these projections, as well as the decision rule in the harvest strategy adopted by the WCPFC (paragraph 5(b) of [HS-2017-02](#)) and IATTC (paragraph 2 of [Resolution C-18-02](#)).

Table 1. The requested scenarios and assumptions (in footnotes) for catch increases that the ISC will be requested to assess. * The last three scenarios were included in the projections presented in the 2018 stock assessment.

| Western Pacific Ocean** | | Eastern Pacific Ocean |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Small fish | Large fish | ----- |
| 0 | 600t | 400t |
| 5% | 1300t | 700t |
| 10% | 1300t | 700t |
| 5% | 1000t | 500t |
| 0 | 1650t | 660t |
| 5% | | 5% |
| 10% | | 10% |
| 15% | | 15% |

* These scenarios will not preempt a decision on allocation of catches between Western Pacific Ocean and Eastern Pacific Ocean and the allocation of any increased portion amongst members.

** 250 mt transfer of catch limit from small fish to large fish by Japan is assumed to continue until 2020.

Japan said that although they could agree to the outcomes document in the Joint WG, they would not endorse them in the Northern Committee. Japan cited the decisions rule recommended by the second Joint WG meeting, which was subsequently adopted by the WCPFC and the IATTC and provided conditions under which the WCPFC or IATTC may consider increases in catch. Japan then suggested leaving the NC meeting open to reconvene during the WCPFC meeting in December. The United States objected, but in the spirit of following process that has been established by the WCPFC, ultimately agreed that the NC Chair will make a request to the Commission that the NC hold a meeting on the fringe of the next WCPFC meeting. As agreed in the minutes, the intent behind this request is to resolve Japan’s reservations about components of the Joint WG outcomes and to adopt the Joint WG outcomes.

The Vice Chair of the ISC’s Pacific Bluefin Tuna Working Group (PBFWG), Shuya Nakatsaki, reviewed the [report of the 1st PBF Management Strategy Evaluation \(MSE\) Workshop](#) held in May 30-31, 2018. The working group discussed the purpose of the MSE and at this time, the purpose remained as described in the report. The next MSE workshop is anticipated for May 2019, with the exact dates and location to be determined. The Joint WG, and NC, are expected to provide the ISC with two candidate limit reference points, one candidate target reference point, and candidate harvest control rules in 2019 for use in the MSE. Neither the Joint WG nor NC decided on funding sources needed for the ISC to hire additional staff to complete the MSE.

The ISC provided an update on upcoming activities, in addition to stock assessments, to the NC. Notably, the ISC Chair indicated that the 4th North Pacific Albacore MSE Workshop will be held March 5-7, 2019, in Yokohama, Japan. There, the ISC will present the initial results of the North Pacific albacore MSE.

The NC did not adopt the U.S. proposal on Western Central North Pacific Ocean (WCNPO) stock of North Pacific swordfish, but Japan suggested the NC consider adopting an effort-limit for the stock. The United States noted that, based on the results of the recent stock assessment, there is no need at this time to consider a catch or effort limit for the stock.

The United States offered to host the NC meeting in 2019, but the exact location has not been determined. The U.S. is exploring options to host it on the U.S. West Coast or Hawaii. It is expected that a five-day meeting would include the 4th Joint WG with the 2nd CDS Technical Meeting, followed by NC15.

Masa Miyahara and Michael Tosatto were elected as candidate Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for another two years. Their election is pending a decision by the WCPFC.

PFMC
09/08/18