

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

### **Management Strategy Evaluations**

As mentioned in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report 1 and Supplemental NMFS Report 3, the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) will be hosting the 4th North Pacific albacore (NPALB) management strategy evaluation (MSE) workshop on March 5-7, 2019, in Yokohama, Japan. The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) supports the initiative by NMFS to host a stakeholder meeting in February in advance of the ISC workshop. Although the ISC workshop overlaps with the March 2019 Council meeting, the HMSMT supports sending an HMSMT and a Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) representative to the ISC's workshop as the ISC is expected to solicit feedback on the results of the initial run of the MSE.

The ISC also intends to host the second Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) MSE workshop, possibly in May on the West Coast of North America. The HMSMT understands that this MSE workshop will be largely informational, although further MSE development may occur. Consequently, the HMSMT supports also sending an HMSMT and an HMSAS representative to this workshop.

### **Defining Effort for North Pacific Albacore in the Eastern Pacific Ocean**

In September 2018, the Council tasked the HMSMT with analyzing fishing effort in the West Coast NPALB fishery to support discussions at the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). In 2005, the IATTC and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) adopted measures calling on members to not increase the level of fishing effort in fisheries fishing for NPALB beyond "current levels." Since that time, WCPFC Northern Committee (NC) has taken steps to specify "current level" as the 2002-2004 average level of effort. Both the WCPFC and IATTC (as of 2018) require members to annually report fishing effort in terms of the number of vessels and fishing days<sup>1</sup>. For the WCPFC, its Secretariat has been compiling this information and providing a report to the NC.<sup>2</sup> Given the progress made in reporting at the WCPFC, and the parallel reporting requirements adopted by the IATTC in 2018, fishing effort information relative to these measures is readily available and could be used to develop recommendations relative to future management of the NPALB fishery. If the Council wishes to consider recommending that the U.S. submit a proposal to the 2019 IATTC Annual Meeting to define effort for NPALB, the HMSMT could provide summaries on catch and effort at the March 2019 Council meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes days searching for fish and actively fishing, but not transiting. The term "fishing days" is used synonymously with the term "vessel days" in the international arena.

<sup>2</sup> The US effort estimates reported to the NC are derived from an ISC Statistics Working Group paper (ISC17/STATWG/WP-1), *Revision of Catch and Effort Estimates in the U.S.A. North Pacific Albacore Troll and Pole-and-Line Fishery* by Arjun Joshi, Yuhong Gu, John Childers, and Steven L. H. Teo, July 2017. This paper describes the methods used to estimate fishing effort and presents these estimates for 2000 through 2016.

## **Proposed Rule for Pacific Bluefin Tuna**

The HMSAS expressed concerns with the pre-trip notification requirement for purse seine vessels that may catch PBF. In particular, they were concerned about the possibility of regulatory discards due to the chance of incidental catch of PBF while fishing for other species. The HMSMT supports their suggestion of a 2 metric ton catch allowance without pre-trip notification, in order to avoid waste which might otherwise occur.

PFMC  
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