

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON OUTCOMES OF A
PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA (PBF) MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION (MSE)
WORKSHOP HOSTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE FOR
TUNA AND TUNA-LIKE SPECIES IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN (ISC)

This report describes the background, current progress, and next steps for the MSE for PBF.

Background

In 2017, the Joint Working Group of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern (WCPFC) Committee (Joint Working Group) recommended beginning an MSE for PBF. The [recommendation](#), which was subsequently adopted by the WCPFC, included ISC-hosted stakeholder workshops in 2018 and 2019. Additionally, the Joint Working Group agreed to aim to provide at its 2019 meeting at least one candidate target reference point, two candidate limit reference points, and candidate harvest control rules. These candidate target and limit reference points and harvest control rules could be changed if appropriate during the MSE process, which is not expected to be completed before 2024.

PBF MSE Workshops

ISC's [first MSE stakeholder workshop](#) was held in May 2018 in Yokohama, Japan. ISC's [second MSE stakeholder workshop](#) was held in May 2019 in San Diego, California. Both workshops were intended to introduce stakeholders to the MSE process, understanding different stakeholders could engage at the different locations. The workshop was co-chaired by Dr. Mark Maunder (IATTC Scientific Staff) and Dr. Shuya Nakatsuka (Japan and ISC PBF Working Group Chair). The approximately 60 participants from Canada, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico, and the United States represented government, fishing industry (commercial and recreational), non-governmental organizations, and Pacific Ocean tuna regional fishery management organizations.

The May 2019 workshop provided an introduction to MSE concepts, similar to the first workshop held in Japan. Participants engaged in a discussion about the purpose of this MSE, management objectives for the PBF fishery, and the process for developing the MSE. Participants held different views on whether this MSE would be used during the rebuilding phase, or after the stock was rebuilt (i.e., whether the MSE assumed the stock had met its rebuilding target). Participants expressed various views on the management objectives, which will be reflected in the future report from the workshop planned for July 2019. Discussion also focused on what body or forum should drive the decisions on components of the MSE (e.g., candidate reference points, management objectives). Participants expressed interest in the Joint Working Group ultimately deciding what factors should be included in the MSE; however, it was also noted that the informal nature of the stakeholder workshops promotes the best discussion for developing factors to include in the MSE. The meeting minutes will be available for the ISC plenary in July 2019.

Next steps

NMFS is soliciting suggestions on the best process for stakeholder engagement and decision-making related to future PBF MSE work from the Council and its advisory bodies. For example, stakeholder workshops could result in sets of candidate reference points and management

objectives for the ISC scientists to evaluate, and the Joint Working Group could add to those recommendations. Alternatively, the workshops could provide recommendations for the Joint Working Group to then refine and pass on to the ISC. The Joint WG meeting schedule, which has to date been held in September concurrent with the Northern Committee, may fluctuate year-to-year as Joint WG members consider aligning the meeting with the IATTC annual meetings in some years (i.e., it may be held before or after the ISC plenary meets). Consequently, should a future process include a review of stakeholder recommendations by the ISC and the Joint WG, there could be complications due to meeting schedules.

Experience with development of MSEs for other fisheries indicates that it would be useful to consider a process of stakeholder engagement and decision-making that is iterative over the course of the MSE work. Some other issues that may be useful to consider include:

- equitable engagement of stakeholders in both the eastern Pacific Ocean and western and central Pacific Ocean,
- general locations of workshops, and
- organizational responsibility and funding sources for workshops.