

RECOMMEND INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

In June 2020, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) was briefed on upcoming Regional Fishery Management Organization (RFMO) meetings (see [Situation Summary, Agenda Item D.1](#)), with a caution that the Covid-19 pandemic had made it uncertain when and in what format such meetings would occur. Since June it has become clear that all RFMO meetings will be conducted online for the foreseeable future. The current status of the meetings referenced in June are:

- The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean Plenary (ISC20) occurred as a virtual meeting as scheduled, July 15-20 (see Attachment 1).
- The 5th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission – Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee Joint Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management (IATTC-WCPFC NC JWG) meeting originally scheduled for July 27-31 will be held virtually the week of October 5th (see Attachment 2).
- The 11th Meeting of the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), during which stock assessments are reviewed for use in management, is scheduled to occur September 21-26.
- The IATTC Chair proposed November 23-27 for the 95th Meeting of the IATTC but those dates have not been agreed to. The U.S. has proposed an earlier set of dates in October.

The ISC Plenary adopted benchmark assessments for Pacific bluefin tuna and North Pacific albacore tuna and associated conservation recommendations. The Plenary Report is attached. (The two assessment documents are available on the [ISC website](#).)

The albacore assessment shows that spawning stock biomass is well above the limit reference point adopted by the WCPFC Northern Committee (NC). No fishing mortality limit reference point has been adopted by RFMOs, but current (2015-2017) fishing mortality is below all commonly accepted reference points (including F_{MSY}) except F_{50} percent (the rate expected to reduce spawning stock biomass to 50 percent of its unfished level). The ISC does note, however, that “estimated recruitment reached historical lows in 2014..., which may have contributed to relatively low catches of fisheries catching juvenile albacore in recent years.” Due to large uncertainties in estimates for the terminal years of the assessment (2016-2018) it is unclear whether recruitment improved after 2015.

Based on the new benchmark Pacific bluefin assessment, spawning stock biomass (SSB) in 2018 is estimated to be 4.5 percent of $SSB_{F=0}$ (unfished SSB), which is an increase from 2016, the terminal year of the previous stock assessment. Recent (2016-2018) fishing mortality (expressed as $F_{\%SPR}$) is estimated to produce 14% SPR.¹ Although this is above commonly accepted F-based

¹ “SPR (spawning potential ratio) is the ratio of the cumulative spawning biomass that an average recruit is expected to produce over its lifetime when the stock is fished at the current fishing level to the cumulative spawning biomass that could be produced by an average recruit over its lifetime if the stock was unfished. $F_{\%SPR}$: F that produces % of the spawning potential ratio (i.e., 1-% SPR).” [Stock Assessment of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Pacific Ocean in 2020](#). ISC20, Annex 11.

reference points (RFMOs have not yet adopted an F-based reference point for Pacific bluefin), projection results estimate the stock will achieve stock rebuilding targets with high probability.

The WCPFC Northern Committee has been rescheduled to immediately follow the IATTC/WCPFC Joint Working Group meeting the week of October 5th (see Attachment 2). The JWG (for bluefin) and NC (for bluefin and albacore) may develop management recommendations based on the two new ISC benchmark assessments. The JWG recommendations are likely to influence the adoption of a new Resolution by the IATTC to succeed Resolution C-18-01 (Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, 2019 and 2020).

Another major task before the IATTC will be to negotiate a successor to IATTC Resolution C-17-02 on tropical tunas (i.e., yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack tuna), which expires at the end of the 2020 calendar year. The new benchmark assessments for EPO bigeye and yellowfin stocks (and associated risk assessment framework) will inform these discussions.

Council Action:

Provide Recommendations to Upcoming International Forums Including the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.1, Attachment 1: ISC20 Plenary Report.
2. Agenda Item E.1, Attachment 2: Letter from Ms. Dorothy Lowman and Mr. Masa Miyahara, Co-Chairs of the Joint Working Group on the Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- E.1 Recommend International Management Activities Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Provide Recommendations to Upcoming International Forums Including the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission

PFMC
08/19/20