

## BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) lays out a biennial process that affords Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) input on identifying key management reference points for HMS stocks. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will use this updated information to determine whether a stock is subject to overfishing (current fishing mortality exceeds the maximum fishing mortality threshold) or overfished (current stock spawning biomass is less than the minimum stock size threshold). The Council then has an opportunity to provide input on identifying these management reference points.

At its September meeting, the Council received an update on status determination criteria (SDC) in a preliminary stock assessment and fishery evaluation (SAFE) report (Agenda Item E.3, Attachment 1, September 2020, Agenda Item E.3.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1). Attachment 1 is an update of the SAFE including estimates of SDC and status determinations provided by NMFS, if available.

NMFS had not yet made status determinations for three stocks: Pacific bluefin tuna, Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) bigeye tuna, and EPO yellowfin tuna. NMFS must make a best scientific information available (BSIA) determination on the outputs of an assessment produced by an international organization, before determining stock status. NMFS employs “other peer review processes” to determine whether an assessment constitutes BSIA for these stocks ([81 FR 54561; August 16, 2016](#)), including through participation by the U.S. government in these organizations. The principal mechanism is review and adoption by the relevant regional fishery management organization.

For Pacific bluefin tuna, NMFS has identified SDC but the BSIA and status determinations are undergoing internal NMFS review subsequent to consideration of the assessment by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee, which met on October 7. For EPO bigeye and yellowfin, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) scientific staff completed new benchmark stock assessments. These are to be reviewed by the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) at its October 26-28 online meeting. NMFS intends to update the Council on this process. NMFS is also seeking Council input on applying the results of the new risk assessment models to status determination criteria, depending on the outcome of the SAC review.

At its September meeting, the Council requested its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) review proxy values selected by NMFS to make status determinations for EPO bigeye and yellowfin tuna pending SAC review of the aforementioned benchmark stock assessments for these stocks in advance of the November Council meeting. However, because of the timing of the SAC meeting, the SSC HMS Subcommittee was unable to meet subsequent to the BSIA determination but before the November Council meeting. The Council may wish to discuss the feasibility of future SSC input on these assessments and related SDC.

### **Council Action:**

**Adopt Available Stock Status Determination Criteria; Consider the Need to Develop Annual Catch Limits or Other Harvest Objectives and/or Management Measures.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item I.3, Attachment 1: Draft Status of Stocks Section from the HMS SAFE Document.
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- I.3 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Available Stock Status Determination Criteria; Consider the Need to Develop Annual Catch Limits or Other Harvest Objectives and/or Management Measures

PFMC  
10/20/20