

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Council tasked the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) with reviewing proxy values selected by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to make best scientific information available (BSIA) status determinations for Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) bigeye and yellowfin tuna. However, due to the timing of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Scientific Advisory Committee, the SSC Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Subcommittee was unable to meet subsequent to the BSIA determination but before the November Council meeting.

Ms. Amber Rhodes (NMFS West Coast Region, WCR) and Ms. Sarah Shoffler (NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, SWFSC) presented information about the challenges for identifying status determination criteria for these stocks. These stock assessments do not follow a standard template for reporting information and do not always report all the information needed to evaluate status based on the status determination criteria (SDC) in the HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP). In particular, the two 2020 IATTC assessments (yellowfin and bigeye tuna) present outputs that are especially difficult to translate into existing proxies for SDC under the HMS FMP. The SSC anticipates other international organizations will use similar stock assessments in the future and so this problem with translation will likely recur in the future.

As the process for extracting SDC from these assessments can be complicated, the SSC suggests that the SWFSC and WCR develop standardized methods for dealing with these stock assessments. In the short term, during the winter of 2020-21 the SSC HMS Subcommittee will review proposed proxies developed by SWFSC and WCR for review by the full SSC during the March 2021 Council meeting. In the longer term, a workshop during 2021 or 2022 may be an appropriate venue to identify and formalize methods for extracting and translating relevant information from these stock assessments into the FMP. Both short- and long-term activities should be conducted in consultation with IATTC staff. The SSC is willing to advise on and review the methods developed by the SWFSC and WCR.

PFMC
11/16/20