

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL
HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ACTIVITIES

Joint Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)-Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF)

The [6th meeting](#) of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on PBF (JWG) convened virtually July 26-28, 2021. The U.S. delegation, led by Michael Tosatto (Pacific Islands Regional Office) and Ryan Wulff (West Coast Region), consisted of representatives from government, industry, and non-governmental organizations. Topics under consideration included future catch limits, the long-term harvest strategy, and harvest control rules (HCRs) to be applied in the period between meeting the initial PBF rebuilding target and before meeting the second rebuilding target. The main outcomes, as detailed in the Chairs' Summary Report ([D.2, Attachment 2](#)), include the following recommendations:

- 1) Increasing catch Pacific-wide in a manner with a high likelihood of meeting rebuilding targets.
- 2) Adopting HCRs that dictate when the IATTC and WCPFC *must* adjust management controls (e.g., catch limits) should the projections performed with stock assessments indicate rebuilding targets will not be achieved, and when the IATTC and WCPFC *may* consider catch increases if the projections indicate a minimum likelihood of meeting rebuilding targets. These HCRs are very similar to those that applied to the period while the stock was increasing to the initial rebuilding target.
- 3) With regards to the report from the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean on management strategy evaluation ([D.2, Attachment 3](#)): gathering input from stakeholders to facilitate a discussion on the long-term harvest strategy at next year's meeting.

These recommendations were forwarded to the IATTC and WCPFC NC for consideration.

IATTC

The [98th meeting of the IATTC](#) convened virtually August 23-27, 2021. The U.S. delegation was led by Alternate U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC, Ryan Wulff (NMFS WCR), and David Hogan (U.S. Department of State), and included other U.S. Commissioners to the IATTC (Mike Thompson, Bill Fox, and John Zuanich), industry, non-governmental organizations, and government representatives. Members submitted proposals on longline observer coverage, transshipment, port state measures, and shark conservation, and IATTC staff submitted proposals on electronic monitoring (EM) . The U.S. also sponsored proposals on tropical tunas, Pacific bluefin tuna, and silky shark. Pacific bluefin and tropical tunas were of particular interest because the current resolutions expire at the end of 2021. After extensive discussion, the IATTC did not adopt measures for tropical tunas or the [short-term proposal](#) to adopt catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna. Additionally, due to time constraints, the IATTC did not discuss the majority of proposals submitted. However, the United States, with support from other members, ensured that EM was considered at this meeting. The IATTC is expected to continue discussing pending proposals

during a meeting tentatively scheduled for October 18-23, 2021. The IATTC did adopt the following:

- 1) Amendment to Resolution C-18-02 (*Amendment to Resolution C-16-08 on a Long-term Management Framework for the Conservation and Management of PBF in the Eastern Pacific Ocean*), which adopts the HCRs recommended by the JWG (see the [U.S. proposal](#) that was adopted without changes, Agenda Item D.2, Supplemental Attachment 5).
- 2) A workplan to develop EM, Terms of Reference for workshops included in the workplan (e.g., format, goals, reporting expectations), and a provisional set of definitions for EM.
- 3) An extension of the interim Executive Director’s term for an additional 6 months or until a new director is appointed.

Regarding domestic implementation of IATTC measures, the resolutions adopted at this meeting do not require regulations. However, the proposals pending on tropical tunas and Pacific bluefin tuna catch limits for 2022-2024, if adopted, will require implementing regulations.

Upcoming 2021 Meetings (virtual)

<u>IATTC</u>	
Compliance Committee (continued) ¹	Oct (tentative)
Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program and IATTC Annual Meeting (continued)	Oct 18-23 (tentative)
2nd EM Workshop	Nov 8-10
<u>WCPFC</u>	
Technical and Compliance Committee	Sep 21-27
Northern Committee	Oct 4-6
Regular Session of the Commission	Nov 28-Dec 6

¹ Due to time constraints, the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures Adopted by the Commission (Compliance Committee) did not complete its work during the scheduled meeting on October 19, 2021. Consequently, the IATTC agreed to continue the meeting at a later date associated with the October IATTC meeting.