HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT TEAM
REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) briefed the Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) on the outcomes of the 98th meeting (continued) of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) (Supplemental NMFS Report 1), considerations for implementing the adopted IATTC resolution on Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF; Resolution C-21-05) (Supplemental NMFS Report 2), and reviewed the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) statement on these matters. The HMSMT also received a presentation from Desiree Tommasi (NMFS Southwest Science Center and the University of California Santa Cruz Institute of Marine Science) and Jessica Watson (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, HMSMT) on a newly developed North Pacific Albacore Tuna Management Strategy Evaluation (Albacore MSE) Shiny web application.

Domestic Implementation of Resolution C-21-05

In its supplemental report, the HMSAS suggests a management approach that is different for each year in 2022-2024, recognizing the differences in annual limits. The current landscape of the PBF fishery (i.e., trip/annual limits, market conditions, catchability, and availability) may have contributed to the PBF annual limit not being met in 2020 and 2021. While the HMSMT recognizes that uncertainty in future PBF landings (i.e., increased trip/annual limits, changing market conditions) complicates drafting of regulations for a three-year management period, the HMSMT understands and supports that any domestic regulations must conform to internationally agreed limits, and should incentivize maximum utilization of that limit by the U.S. fleet, while disincentivizing exceeding that limit.

The HMSMT supports the HMSAS intent to increase flexibility for U.S. commercial vessels due to the increase in annual limits. The HMSMT supports the trip limit structure proposed by the HMSAS, which is consistent with the current regulations for 2021 and approaches to implementing prior PBF IATTC resolutions. The HMSMT recognizes uncertainty in the 2024 catch limit because it is dependent on the quantity caught in 2023. Noting this, the HMSMT supports planning for various scenarios where the trip limit structure is contingent on a range of possible catch limits.

Albacore MSE Shiny Web Application

During the September 2021 Council meeting the HMSMT was briefed on the Albacore MSE shiny web application under development to help managers and stakeholders familiarize themselves with this new product. After the Fifth International Scientific Committee Stakeholder Workshop, this shiny web application was developed to provide stakeholders with an interactive method of exploring the results from the Report of the Albacore MSE. This application includes several tabs that help the user understand concepts of the MSE and then an evaluation tool that allows users to make selections and evaluate results of the MSE in relation to their particular concerns about the fishery. The beta version of this application was presented in a joint session of the HMSMT and the HMSAS during this November Council meeting, with the goal of obtaining feedback on utility and gaining recommendations for refinement. The HMSMT considers this application useful at assisting stakeholders in processing and learning how to use the results of the MSE. The HMSMT

thinks this will be a particularly useful tool as the U.S. Delegations to the IATTC and WCPFC Northern Committee consider next steps with regards to developing a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore using the results of the MSE. The Northern Committee has stated its intent to "consider retention or modification of an LRP [limit reference point] and consider adoption of a TRP [target reference point]" based on the results of the MSE in 2022. The HMSMT recommends that the Council request a presentation of the Albacore MSE under international management at the March 2022 Council meeting.

PFMC
11/18/21