

BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES –  
PRELIMINARY

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. Related to this process section 4.6 in the HMS FMP states the Council receives a draft stock assessment and fishery evaluation (SAFE) report (Attachment 1) at its September meeting with the final SAFE provided in November. However, since 2014 the [SAFE has been maintained on the Council website](#). This makes it possible to regularly update information as it becomes available. In past years an “archive copy” of the SAFE, compiling website content, has been produced at the beginning of the year. Starting this year, the production of this document version of the SAFE will follow the schedule described in the FMP.

Chapter 6 in the SAFE contains information related to status determination criteria (SDC) for HMS stocks including a listing of the most recent stock assessments upon which status determinations are based.<sup>1</sup> 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 [MFMT]) or overfished (current stock spawning biomass is less than the minimum stock size threshold [MSST]). The Council then has an opportunity to provide input on identifying these management reference points.

HMS are subject to Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) Section 304(i) when the overfishing or overfished status of the stock is primarily a result of “excessive international fishing pressure.” While the Council may propose measures to address the “relative impact of fishing vessels of the United States on the stock,” the broader charge is for the Council to develop recommendations for “international actions.” This differs from stocks fully subject to domestic management, where determinations lead to remedial action by the Council.

As part of the process of estimating SDC and making stock status determinations, NMFS considers whether these stock assessments constitute “the best scientific information available” or BSIA. This occurs once the regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) have adopted the assessments for management. NMFS is currently undertaking this review; therefore, any revised SDC estimates (otherwise found in the SAFE document) will be provided in a supplemental NMFS Report.

Through two subsequent meetings (November 2022 and March of 2023), the Council may make recommendations to NMFS about any revised SDC estimates. It also may formulate

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<sup>1</sup> HMS FMP management unit species stock assessments are conducted under the auspices of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific (ISC), conducts stock assessments and provides conservation advice formally through an agreement with the WCPFC Northern Committee. The Secretariat of the Pacific Community Oceanic Fisheries Program (SPC-OFP) also conducts stock assessments on behalf of the WCPFC.

recommendations on domestic management measures and measures that should be addressed through relevant RFMOs to address stock status.

For HMS, the Council is not obligated to set annual catch limits (ACLs). In those cases where catch limits have been set for U.S. West Coast domestic fisheries (Pacific bluefin and bigeye tuna), these derive from agreements reached internationally through the IATTC. At the same time, the Council is not prohibited from establishing catch control measures, or other measures to address management concerns, through this biennial process.

At this meeting, the Council has the opportunity to scope such new management measures. However, at this time no management measures that could be implemented through the biennial process have been identified. The HMS Advisory Subpanel and HMS Management Team have the opportunity to bring forward management proposals in supplemental reports.

**Council Action:**

**Review Preliminary Reference Point Values and Make Recommendations on Their Use in Determining Stock Status; Consider the Need to Develop Annual Catch Limits or Other Harvest Objectives and/or Management Measures.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item I.4, Attachment 1: Draft Status of the U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species through 2021 (July 2022) (***Electronic Only***).
2. *Agenda Item I.4.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1: Recent assessment data for all HMS MUS.*
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

**Agenda Order:**

- I.4 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures – Preliminary Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Review Preliminary Reference Point Values and Make Recommendations on Their Use in Determining Stock Status; Consider the Need to Develop Annual Catch Limits or Other Harvest Objectives and/or Management Measures

PFMC  
08/11/22