

## 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 at its September meeting with the final SAFE provided in November. Attachment 1 is the final SAFE Report.

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) uses updated information from new stock assessments to determine whether a stock is subject to overfishing (current fishing mortality exceeds the maximum fishing mortality threshold [MFMT]) or overfished (current stock biomass is less than the minimum stock size threshold [MSST]). The Council then has an opportunity to provide input on suitable reference points from recent stock assessments for determining stock status relative to MFMT and MSST.

Section 4.4.1 in the HMS FMP identifies the following methods for identifying MFMT and MSST:

- **MFMT** equals  $F_{MSY}$ .
- **MSST** is calculated as the greater of:
  - $B_{MSST} = (1-M)B_{MSY}$  when  $M$  (natural mortality)  $\leq 0.5$ , or
  - $B_{MSST} = 0.5B_{MSY}$  when  $M > 0.5$

[Agenda Item I.4.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1, September 2022](#), contains the reference points and MFMT/MSST estimates for HMS stocks. In cases when reference point quantities ( $B_{MSY}$ ,  $F_{MSY}$ ) cannot be directly estimated proxy values are used. During the 2018-2019 biennial cycle, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed methods used by NMFS to derive such proxies from HMS stock assessments. Then, during the 2020-2021 biennial cycle, the SSC reviewed new proxies for Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) bigeye and yellowfin stocks based on the IATTC benchmark assessments. In this cycle NMFS used new proxies to estimate SDC for two stocks: EPO skipjack (assessed by the IATTC) and North Pacific bluefin (assessed by the ISC). The SSC will report on the methods used for Council consideration of those proxies.

---

<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.

**Council Action:**

**Approve Available MSY-based Proxies for Stock Status Determination Criteria.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item G.4, Attachment 1: 2021 HMS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Document (***Electronic Only***).
2. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

**Agenda Order:**

- G.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:** Approve Available MSY-based Proxies for Stock Status Determination Criteria

PFMC  
10/07/22