

STAFF SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE NINETEENTH REGULAR SESSION OF  
THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION (WCPFC19)

Ms. Christa Svensson participated in WCPFC19 as a U.S. Commissioner as did Dr. Kit Dahl, Council staff.

Agenda Item I.2, Attachment 1, provides a high level summary of WCPFC19 outcomes. This paper focuses on those outcomes of most interest to the Pacific Council. A [draft meeting report](#) was posted on the WCPFC website on January 17, 2023, and adopted Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) are also available on the website.<sup>1</sup> Delegation papers and other materials referenced below are available on the [WCPFC19 webpage](#).

U.S. Proposals

The U.S. submitted three delegation papers for consideration at the meeting. The first two, DP-01 and DP-02, were submitted jointly with Canada. Results of these proposals are summarized below.

DP-01, Proposed Revisions to the Conservation and Management Measure for Sharks (CMM 2019-04). This proposal would extend the prohibition on shark finning in paragraph 7 through 2024, prohibit wire trace as branch lines or leaders or use shark lines beginning in 2024, and require specific release practices for sharks beginning in 2024. The proposal went through several revisions up to adoption (as [CMM 2022-04](#)). The extension of the shark finning prohibition was adopted.<sup>2</sup> The prohibition on wire traces and shark lines was limited to longline vessels targeting tuna and billfish in the area between 20° N. and 20° S. latitude (paragraph 16) with direction to the Scientific Committee to periodically review the impact to sharks not retained inside and outside the area. The release practices were adopted as paragraph 20.

DP-14, Incorporating Climate Change within the WCPFC. Based on the proposal, the Commission agreed to make the issue of climate change a standing item on its agenda and those of its subsidiary bodies (see paragraph 343, p. 63, in the draft report).

DP-02, Strengthening and Revising WCPFC CMM 2009-06 on Transshipment in 2023. Referencing concerns about ongoing illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing operations and other criminal activities, this proposal outlined a process for the Transshipment Intersessional Working Group (TS-IWG) to bring forward changes in the CMM for consideration at WCPFC20. Elements of this recommendation were incorporated into the TS-IWG Work Plan (Attachment Y in the draft report).

---

<sup>1</sup> Participants comments are due no later than close of business on March 1, 2023 (GMT +11 hours). Readers may wish to check the [WCPFC website](#) for availability of the final report subsequent to that deadline.

<sup>2</sup> Note that paragraph 9 of the measure enumerates alternative measures where fins need not be attached but the association between a carcass and fin must be identifiable.

## Northern Committee

The following measures proposed by the Northern Committee (NC) were adopted:

- [HS-2022-01, Harvest Strategy for North Pacific Albacore Fishery \(Attachment J in the draft summary report\)](#). This harvest strategy is consistent with that adopted by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).
- [CMM 2022-02, Conservation and Management Measure for North Pacific Swordfish](#). This measure implements fishing effort limits for fisheries taking North Pacific swordfish in the area north of 20° N. latitude. The U.S. encouraged the Commission to consider how to manage the stock across its entire range and the Northern Committee Chair advocated future adoption of a supplementary measure for that purpose.

Korea presented DP-12, *Information Paper on the bycatch of the Pacific Bluefin Tuna in set net fisheries in Korean Territorial Waters*. The Commission noted that Korea would bring forward a proposal in 2023 to address discards related to potential quota overages. The proposal would be considered by the Joint NC/IATTC Pacific Bluefin Working Group and Northern Committee in advance of WCPFC20.

Revision of CMM 2010-01 for North Pacific striped marlin was deferred pending completion of a stock assessment by the International Scientific Committee. The Commission expressed concern about the delay in developing a rebuilding plan considering the depleted status of the stock.

## Other Actions

[DP-05, Proposed Amendment to CMM 2013-05 on Daily Catch and Effort Reporting](#). This proposal was submitted by Forum Fisheries Agency Members and went through several revisions led by New Zealand. The proposal as revised was adopted as [CMM 2022-06](#). The revised CMM, which comes into effect in 2024, requires vessels to maintain an electronic log when fishing on the high seas of the Convention Area. Troll vessels targeting albacore may keep a written log for an additional year, or until January 1, 2025. Some West Coast albacore troll vessels fish in the South Pacific and would have to use an electronic log compliant with WCPFC protocols when fishing in the Convention Area. Therefore, National Marine Fisheries Service will have to develop an electronic log for that purpose over the next two years.

[Harvest strategy development](#). WCPFC adopted CMM 2014-06 in 2014 to guide development of harvest strategies for key stocks and fisheries. Work on harvest strategies has been a slow process but WCPFC19 adopted a management procedure for skipjack tuna as an element of the harvest strategy ([CMM 2021-01](#)). (Western and Central Pacific skipjack accounts for about a third of global tuna catch and is the target of the purse seine fishery.) This management procedure will guide development of a new tropical tuna measure in 2023. This CMM includes a sunset date of February 15, 2030; the U.S. would have preferred that the measure be permanent without a sunset date. A candidate harvest strategy for South Pacific albacore could not be adopted. Work will continue under a revised Indicative Work Plan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies (Attachment M in the draft meeting report). In response to potential loss of Marine Stewardship Council certification for WCP tuna fisheries, CMM 2014-06 was amended as [CMM 2022-03](#) to insert

paragraph 14 stating that in the absence of an adopted harvest strategy the Commission will adopt harvest control rules for key stocks before a stock falls below  $B_{MSY}$ .

Crew labor standards. The Commission has been developing a measure to address crew labor standards through an intersessional working group, which submitted a report to WCPFC19 including a draft measure ([WCPFC19-2022 Labour Standards IWG report](#)). Although disappointment was expressed at the slow advancement of a proposal, opinions diverge on the scope of the measure and no proposal was negotiated in plenary.

Compliance monitoring scheme (CMS). A compliance monitoring report (for activities in 2021) was not considered so that work could continue on a new CMS measure to be adopted in 2023. Reporting will recommence in 2023 (covering reporting years 2021 and 2022). Tools for compliance monitoring, including audit points and a risk based assessment framework, were discussed and progressed. Guidelines for the participation of observers (e.g., nongovernmental organizations) in the compliance monitoring process were discussed but no agreement was reached; members appear to be at loggerheads on this issue.

Tropical tuna measure. The current measure, CMM 2021-01, remains in effect until February 15, 2024, so a replacement must be agreed to at WCPFC20 in 2023. Furthermore, substantial progress on the development of major aspects of the management scheme (e.g., catch limits and allocation frameworks) was slowed by Commission meetings being held online in 2020 and 2021; thus negotiations this year could be particularly intense. A negotiation process proposed by the outgoing WCPFC Chair, featuring two intersessional workshops, was adopted (Attachment H in the draft meeting report).

The other adopted measure not already referenced is [CMM 2022-05](#), *Standards, specifications and procedures for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Record of Fishing Vessels*. This was a technical update to the existing measure (CMM 2014-03) recommended by the Technical and Compliance Committee ([WCPFC-TCC18-2022-21](#)), specifying the file format for submission of vessel information to the Secretariat.

PFMC  
02/09/23