

INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Several regional fishery management organization (RFMO) meetings are set to occur over the summer, with outcomes of interest to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council or Council). Key issues at these meetings are described below.

Eighth Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) - Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting on Pacific Bluefin Management (July 3-5) and 19th Regular Session of the Northern Committee (July 6-7)

At its last meeting in July 2022, the JWG reviewed candidate operational management objectives and performance indicators for a Pacific bluefin management strategy evaluation (MSE) but was unable to adopt them. The MSE forms the basis for development of a long-term harvest strategy. It also reviewed an interim harvest strategy put forward by the U.S., recognizing that the stock is reaching its rebuilding target. Consensus was not achieved on this proposal either. In 2023 the JWG will continue work on the MSE and harvest strategy development. Korea may propose a catch limit increase from the levels in WCPFC [CMM 2021-02](#) and IATTC [Resolution C-21-05](#), based on their comments at WCPFC19. The NC will review the recommendations from the JWG including any Pacific bluefin management measures to be considered by the full Commission at its next regular session in December 2023. In 2022, both the WCPFC and IATTC adopted elements of a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore developed in the NC process (WCPFC [HS 2022-01](#) and IATTC [Resolution C-22-04](#)). Both regional fishery management organizations expressed their intent to adopt harvest control rules in 2023 for inclusion in the harvest strategy. The NC will consider and make recommendations on proposals related to this objective. As they become available, relevant materials for these meetings (e.g., delegation proposals) may be distributed in supplemental briefing materials. The NC may hold a second, online meeting in September to consider any new information and finalize its recommendations for the WCPFC annual meeting.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) held two online workshops in the first part of 2023 to solicit stakeholder input for U.S. positions at these meetings. The first workshop covered North Pacific albacore; NMFS presented a [summary report](#) to the Council in March 2023. The second workshop solicited input on operational management objectives, performance indicators, and candidate reference points and harvest control rules for the Pacific bluefin MSE. NMFS Report 1 is a summary of that meeting.

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, JWG Co-Chair, will be available to brief the Council on the upcoming meeting.

23rd Plenary Meeting of the International Scientific Committee (ISC, July 12-17)

At its last meeting, the ISC Plenary did not adopt a Western and Central North Pacific Ocean striped marlin assessment for management purposes. It directed the Billfish Working Group to continue investigating the growth curve used in the assessment with the intent of reviewing and adopting the assessment in 2023. In addition to reviewing a revised striped marlin assessment, the

ISC Plenary will review full assessments for North Pacific albacore and Western and Central North Pacific swordfish. [As reported in September 2022](#), the swordfish assessment will be based on a new stock definition covering a larger portion of the North Pacific.

101st Meeting of the IATTC (August 7-11)

Recommendations from the JWG (Pacific bluefin) and the NC (North Pacific albacore harvest strategy) are likely to be considered by the IATTC in terms of the adoption of any binding measures. The IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee met May 15-19 to review information pertaining to both the northern stocks referenced above and the development of an MSE for the tropical tuna fishery.

Other than these RFMO meetings, two other international management issues are of interest to the Council.

As reported in November 2022, the current three-year fishing regime pursuant to the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty expired at the end of 2022. The Treaty establishes privileges allowing vessels of each country to fish in the other country's Exclusive Economic Zone. As of this writing the parties held two negotiating sessions on the next regime establishing specific access conditions but were unable to reach agreement. The next fishing season under the Treaty begins on June 15; without an agreement reciprocal access would be curtailed. Mr. David Hogan, the Department of State representative on the Pacific Council, will brief the Council on the status of the negotiations.

In March, the Council was alerted to the just-finalized legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). The Council endorsed a request from the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel that a representative of the U.S. government brief the Council on the elements and implications of the agreement. In response, Ms. Elana Mendelson, Department of State, will brief the Council.

The attached NMFS Report 2 contains additional information on these issues.

Council Action:

Identify Issues to be Addressed and Provide Guidance on Process and Timeline.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.2.a, NMFS Report 1, Summary of the April 19, 2023, U.S. Stakeholder Meeting on Harvest Strategy Components for a Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Bluefin Tuna.
2. Agenda Item J.2.a, NMFS Report 2, International Issues.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

J.2 International Management Activities

Kit Dahl

- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Provide Recommendations on U.S. Positions at Upcoming Meetings and Other Forums, as Appropriate

PFMC

05/25/23