

## **NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (HMS) ACTIVITIES**

This report provides updates on recent meetings of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC).

### **Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna (JWG)**

The 4th Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Technical Meeting met July 3, 2023, to discuss options for the structure of a CDS. Topics included whether to model a Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) CDS after existing CDSs, and how to manage and pay for the CDS considering purview would span across both the IATTC and WCPFC. The Working Group intends to have virtual intersessional discussions in advance of a meeting next year to further development of the CDS. See the [summary report](#) for more information.

The 7th Meeting of the JWG to discuss PBF management occurred July 3-5, 2023, in Fukuoka, Japan, and was co-chaired by Dorothy Lowman and Masa Miyahara. The United States delegation consisted of representatives from government, industry and non-governmental organizations and was led by Ryan Wulff (NMFS West Coast Region). The JWG made progress on the management strategy evaluation (MSE) for PBF, which will inform a long-term harvest strategy. The JWG recommended candidate management objectives, performance indicators, reference points, and harvest control rules based on U.S. proposals. The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species (ISC) will use those recommendations to complete the MSE, which is anticipated to occur in 2025.

The JWG also recommended an interim harvest strategy that would provide decision rules for PBF catch increases and decreases. There are existing decision rules that apply until the second rebuilding target is met. See [IATTC Resolution C-21-05](#) (Paragraph 3) for the existing rules. The JWG recognized the need for decision rules to apply after meeting the rebuilding target is met (which is anticipated in the ISC's 2024 stock assessment), and until a long-term harvest strategy informed by the MSE is adopted. The IATTC adopted an amendment to Resolution C-21-05 to incorporate the interim rules. See the JWG [summary report](#) and [webpage](#) for more information.

In anticipation of a new stock assessment, the JWG recommended that the ISC provide projections for specific catch scenarios. The list of scenarios is available in the JWG [summary report](#). Japan offered to host the next JWG meeting July 10-16, 2024.

### **WCPFC NC**

The 19th Meeting of the NC occurred July 6-7, 2023, in Fukuoka, Japan. The NC adopted the recommendations of the JWG, a revision to the North Pacific albacore (NPALB) harvest strategy to include harvest control rules based on a proposal co-sponsored by the United States and Canada, and minor revisions to a North Pacific swordfish conservation and management measure that would not change the substance of the existing CMM. See the [summary report](#) and [webpage](#) for more information.

## IATTC

The 101st Meeting of the IATTC took place August 7-11, 2023, in Victoria, BC, Canada. See the [meeting webpage](#) for more information, including all proposals. Resolutions, when available, will be posted on the [Resolutions webpage](#). The resolutions include:

- A North Pacific albacore harvest strategy (co-sponsored by the United States);
- A PBF harvest strategy to apply after the second rebuilding target is met (co-sponsored by the United States);
- Requirements for non-entangling design on fish aggregating devices (FADs) by 2025 (co-sponsored by the United States), and a schedule for requiring biodegradable materials on FADs;
- Extension of silky shark conservation and management measures, which expire at the end of 2023, for an additional two years (sponsored by the United States);
- A requirement to include consideration of climate change impacts to target and non-target species as a standing agenda item on the agendas of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group, Scientific Advisory Committee, and IATTC annual meeting (sponsored by the United States);
- Shark conservation measures to improve data collection and a requirement to have fins naturally attached, with some exceptions until the end of 2026; in 2026, if there is no agreement by the Commission on how to proceed with the exceptions, the resolution will default back to the existing language on a fins to carcass ratio;
- An amendment to the vessel monitoring system (VMS) resolution that requires vessel operators to manually transmit VMS data in the event of a mechanical failure of the VMS unit;
- An amendment to a resolution to explicitly allow voluntary FAD retrieval programs and sets parameters for those programs;
- An amendment to the interim harvest control rule resolution for tropical tunas to include interim reference points for skipjack (interim reference points for bigeye and yellowfin tuna were already included);
- A resolution to encourage more data collection and analysis on dorado (*Coryphaena hippurus*), including potentially completing a stock assessment in the future; and,
- The budget for 2024.

Panama offered to host the Agreement on an International Dolphin Conservation program, IATTC subsidiary bodies, and IATTC annual meeting next year August 26-September 6, 2024. Andres Arens of Ecuador was elected to be Chair of the IATTC in 2024. The United States continues to have leadership roles in the IATTC—Rachael Wadsworth (NMFS WCR) was elected as Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, Dr. Yonat Swimmer (NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center) as co-Chair of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group, and Celia Barroso (NMFS WCR) as co-Chair of the Electronic Monitoring Working Group.

### Upcoming meetings in 2023

<u><i>LATTC-related Meetings</i></u>	
1st Electronic Monitoring Working Group meeting	Date TBD (Virtual)
6th Electronic Monitoring Workshop	Date TBD (virtual)

<u><i>WCPFC</i></u>	
Scientific Committee	August 16-24, 2023 (Palau)
Technical and Compliance Committee	September 20-26, 2023 (Federated States of Micronesia)
20th Regular Session of the Commission	December 4-8, 2023 (Cook Islands)