

GUIDE TO KEY ELEMENTS IN THE REPORT OF THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL
PACIFIC FISHERIES COMMISSION NORTHERN COMMITTEE NINETEENTH
REGULAR SESSION (NC19)

This guide points out key agreements reached at the NC19 meeting. (The meeting report is found in Attachment 1.) These agreements are found as attachments to the NC 19 report.¹

Modifications to the Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (Attachment D, pp. 28-31). Footnote 2 is modified to increase the proportion of the small fish (<30 kg) limit that may be transferred to the large fish (≥30 kg) limit using the specified conversion factor. The footnote has an additional transfer provision specific to Korea, a CCM (Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members, and Participating Territories of the WCPFC) that “does not have an initial catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna 30kg or larger before 2022.” This proportion was increased as well.

International Scientific Committee (ISC) Projection Scenarios Requested by JWG08 (Attachment E, p. 34). The ISC is scheduled to complete a benchmark assessment of Pacific bluefin in 2024, which is expected to show that the stock has achieved the second rebuilding target of 20 percent of unfished spawning stock biomass (20%SSB0). The agreed-to projection scenario guidance is based on [a proposal from the U.S.](#) There is substantial pressure to increase catch limits, perhaps substantially, in 2024 based on stock recovery (see [DP-14](#) from Japan and [DP 18](#) from Korea). These projection scenarios, based on the stock assessment results, are likely to be influential. Of note, scenarios to be evaluated include those that would result in a 70:30 and 80:20 proportional Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO): Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) fishery impact by 2034. Increasing the EPO share has been a top line U.S. position.

Candidate Operational Management Objectives and Performance Indicators for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (Attachment F, p. 35). Management objectives and performance indicators are benchmarks for management strategy evaluation (MSE), upon which a long-term harvest strategy will be based. The U.S. provided a proposal on this topic at JWG07 but consensus was not achieved at that time. JWG08 made further modifications to the proposal and was able to adopt it. Generally, the objectives are slightly less risk averse (e.g., for stability a range of probabilities between 5% and 20% for the stock falling below the limit reference points was posited in 2022 and JWG08 chose 20%). There was considerable discussion around the yield objective of maintaining an equitable WCPO-EPO balance. The U.S. was able to have the objective retained against objections from other members but references to the historical 1971-1994 EPO fishery impact were not retained.

Candidate Harvest Control Rules and Reference Points to Evaluate in the Management Strategy Evaluation (Attachment G, pp. 36-37). The U.S. submitted a proposal ([DP-13](#)), which was reviewed by the Council in June. An additional harvest control rule (HCR) shape and several

¹ The NC19 meeting report also includes the meeting report of the Eighth Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) – Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission NC Joint Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Management (JWG08) as Attachment C. JWG08 report annexes not reproduced as attachments to the NC19 report may be found in the [full JWG08 report](#).

additional candidate reference points were added in achieving consensus on the proposal. The document retains language from the U.S. proposal specifying that HCRs will be tested with allocations tuned to reach a WCPO:EPO impact of 70:30 in addition to 80:20. Overall, this tasking identifies a manageable number of candidate management procedures for MSE analysis (12 procedures tested against the two allocation scenarios).

Revised Harvest Strategy for Pacific Bluefin Tuna Fisheries (Attachment H, pp. 38-42). The U.S. submitted a proposal at JWG07 (JWG07-DP-13) for an interim harvest strategy applicable from the time the second rebuilding target is met and the long-term harvest strategy is adopted (likely to be from 2024 until at least 2026²). Although reviewed and edited at JWG07, it was not adopted. JWG08 adopted it largely as originally proposed. NC19 incorporated it into the existing harvest strategy for review and adoption by the full Commission.

Harvest Strategy for North Pacific Albacore Fishery (Attachment I, pp. 43-45). The section on HCRs proposed by the U.S. and Canada was incorporated into the Harvest Strategy with some changes. (The original U.S.-Canada proposal was reviewed by the Council in June.) The minimum allowed fishing intensity (F_{MIN}) was changed from F94% to F87%. The probability of the stock being at or below the limit reference point (LRP) (for invocation of a rebuilding plan) was changed from 20% to 50%. Japan proposed a “sunset date” for the Harvest Strategy but the NC ultimately only adopted a provision to complete a review by the NC and ISC “by 2030 and 2033.”

PFMC
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² According the Work Plan for Development of a Long-Term Harvest Strategy (JWG08 report Annex J) in 2025 JWG recommends a final HS to the WCPFC and IATTC for adoption, suggesting it would become operational in 2026.