

INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

As reported at the June Council meeting ([Agenda Item G.2, Situation Summary](#)), a number of meetings held over the summer have implications for West Coast highly migratory species management. Specifically, catch limit increases for Pacific bluefin tuna were proposed by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)-Western and Central Pacific Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Joint Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management (JWG), subsequently adopted by the NC. The reports of the meetings of these two bodies are available on the WCPFC website (see the [Summary Report](#) for the Twentieth Regular Session of the Northern Committee, which includes, as Attachment C, the Chairs’ Summary Report of the JWG meeting). For convenience, the proposed revised conservation and management measure (succeeding CMM 2023-02), applicable to the WCPFC Convention Area, and resolution (succeeding Resolution C-21-05), applicable to the IATTC Convention Area, are provided as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. These measures must be adopted by the full commissions to be operative in 2025. For the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), this will happen at the September 2-6 IATTC meeting and outcomes will be reported to the Council. For the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO), this will happen at the 21<sup>st</sup> WCPFC meeting, November 28 to December 3.

These measures propose substantial catch limit increases based on the latest [Pacific bluefin tuna benchmark stock assessment](#) adopted by the International Scientific Committee (ISC) at its 24<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting and related conservation recommendations adopted by the Plenary (see [ISC24 Report](#), pp. 26-41). This assessment found that estimated spawning stock biomass is 23.2 percent of unfished spawning stock biomass ( $SSB_{F=0}$ ), exceeding the second rebuilding target, 20%  $SSB_{F=0}$ . The ISC also provided projections of stock status based on a range of catch limit scenarios requested by the JWG Co-Chairs.<sup>1</sup> These formed the basis of negotiations on the increases. For the WCPO, the overall proposed increase for fish less than 30 kg is 8 percent and for fish 30 kg or greater is 56 percent, based on a comparison of the current and proposed measure. (Because the measures include a carryover provision and small fish to large fish quota conversions, the actual interannual increases may vary slightly.) For the EPO the increases in biennial limits (in metric tons) are:

	USA	Mexico	Total
<a href="#">C-21-05</a> (2023-2024 biennial limit)	1,017	6,973	7,990
Proposed (2025-2026 biennial limit)*	1,822	10,763	12,585
<b>Percent increase</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>58%</b>

\*see Attachment 2

The attached National Marine Fisheries Service Report provides more details on the basis for the proposed WCPO and EPO catch limit increases and summarizes other outcomes of the JWG and NC meetings. It also summarizes proposed Resolutions the U.S. is sponsoring or cosponsoring for consideration by the IATTC at its annual meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Projections for the originally requested scenarios, 1-12, are presented in Section 6, pp. 71-72, of the [stock assessment](#); projections for additionally requested scenarios, 13-18, are presented in Appendix 2, pp. 169-175.

The proposed Pacific bluefin catch limit increases should prompt a revision of the current U.S. domestic management measures ([87 FR 47939](#)). The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will brief the Council on its plans for stakeholder consultations as part of developing regulatory changes. (Note that these regulations are implemented under the Tuna Conventions Act so the Council cannot independently propose regulatory changes as is the case for Magnuson-Stevens Act actions.)

As noted at the June Council meeting, to support implementing the North Pacific Albacore Harvest Strategy ([IATTC Resolution C-23-02](#)), the NC directed the ISC to develop “criteria for identification of exceptional circumstances” (paragraph 1.e) and “how fishing intensity should be interpreted to actual management under this harvest strategy” (paragraph 1.j). However, the NC deferred any substantive action on these two elements until 2025.

**Council Action:**

**Provide Recommendations on U.S. Positions at Upcoming Meetings and Other Forums, as Appropriate.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.2, Attachment 1: Recommended Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna.
2. Agenda Item J.2, Attachment 2: Recommended IATTC Resolution C-24-XX, Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.
3. Agenda Item J.2.a, NMFS Report 1.
4. 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  
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