

BIENNIAL HARVEST SPECIFICATIONS AND MANAGEMENT MEASURES – FINAL

The Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) lays out a biennial process that affords Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) input on identifying key management reference points for HMS stocks. At the September Council meeting National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) presented updated information on biological reference points, status determination criteria (SDC), and preliminary status determinations based on stock assessments conducted in 2023 and 2024 ([Agenda Item J.3.a, NMFS Report 1](#)). The attached NMFS Report made corrections to the reference point values reported in [Agenda Item J.3.a, Supplemental NMFS Report 1](#) for the Pacific bluefin tuna stock, which do not affect the status determination. No stocks managed under the HMS FMP have been found to be subject to overfishing or overfished.¹ The Council reviewed the SDCs and resulting status determinations and had no comment except it requested the Scientific and Statistical Committee review the basis for shortfin mako shark SDCs and report back to the Council on their appropriate use. If the Council has no additional comments, the SDCs and pending status determinations may be considered adopted.

This biennial process also affords the Council an opportunity to propose changes to regulations promulgated pursuant to the HMS FMP. The [HMSAS asked](#) that the Council recommend an increase to the incidental landing limit for HMS in the small-mesh drift gillnet fishery ([50 CFR 660.711\(a\)\(1\)](#)). (§ 660.711 addresses HMS caught by gear not authorized by HMS FMP regulations.) The Council agreed to consider such a regulatory change and take final action at this meeting, if possible. The HMS Management Team and HMS Advisory Subpanel will provide additional information to support the Council's decision.

The HMS FMP states that the Council receives a draft stock assessment and fishery evaluation (SAFE) report at its September meeting with the final SAFE provided in November. A draft SAFE report was provided in September and a final SAFE report, updated with information on stock status, is provided here as Attachment 1.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt Proposed Adjustments to the Numerical Estimates of MSY, OY, and Stock Status Determination Criteria.**
- 2. Review Analysis And Recommend Changes to the Highly Migratory Species Incidental Landing Limit for the small mesh drift Gillnet Fishery in Federal Regulations at 50 CFR 660.711(a)(1).**

¹ NMFS reported that the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean striped marlin stock is subject to overfishing but not overfished according to status determination criteria derived from the HMS FMP. However, as noted by the HMSMT ([Agenda Item J.3.a, Supplemental HMSMT Report 1](#)), the eastern boundary of the assessed stock is 150° W longitude and no West Coast vessels managed under the HMS FMP fish on this stock. Therefore, it is not considered to be managed under the FMP and the Council is not obligated to respond to this determination under MSA Section 304(i) although it always has the option to make recommendations on either international or domestic actions to end overfishing and rebuild the stock.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.3, Attachment 1 (*Electronic Only*): Final 2023 HMS SAFE.
2. Agenda Item H.3.a, NMFS Report 1.
3. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- H.3 Biennial Harvest Specifications and Management Measures – Final Kit Dahl
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Available Stock Status Determination Criteria; Consider the Need to Develop Annual Catch Limits or Other Harvest Objectives and/or Management Measures

PFMC
10/17/24