Summary of a U.S. Stakeholder Meeting on North Pacific Albacore Management
April 25, 2025
Virtual

Pacific Islands Regional Office and West Coast Region

On April 25, 2025, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Regional Office and West Coast Region hosted a webinar to gather input from U.S. stakeholders on North Pacific albacore management. NMFS posed a series of focus questions to participants, specifically related to translating fishing intensity to management measures in the harvest strategies recently adopted by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). NMFS additionally asked a couple of questions related to draft criteria for identifying exceptional circumstances. NMFS also provided an update on the development of two electronic logbook applications for the albacore troll fleet. Meeting materials from the webinar including a background paper and slides presented during the webinar are included in Appendices I and II, respectively.

Translating Fishing Intensity to Management Measures

Participants expressed several views when asked for their preferences for translating fishing intensity to management measures. Some participants expressed hesitation on placing any additional limits to the troll fishery as they stated that the albacore fishery is one of the few U.S. fisheries remaining available for fishermen to easily enter. Other participants stated that they did not want this fishery to be managed under a total allowable catch (TAC) as a TAC could potentially constrain their ability to capitalize on catch when biomass is available. These participants stated that they observed TACs in other fisheries to promote unsafe practices, and that TACs incentivize a race to fish, which may lead to unfavorable market and revenue conditions for the fleet if catch is concentrated at the beginning of the season rather than spread out over the entire season. Several participants expressed support for a mixed control approach with the surface fleet (e.g., troll and pole and line fisheries) to be managed via effort controls. For the surface fleets, some participants stated support for effort to be limited through vessel number whereas others were critical of limited entry programs in other fisheries and stated support for effort to be limited through vessel day numbers. Some participants stated that the current management system was working, and they did not see the need for immediate action, whereas other participants felt that it was important to revise the harvest strategy to be able to maintain MSC certifications desired by the market. A couple of participants noted that on a per day basis, the Japanese pole and line fishery is more efficient at catching albacore than the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) surface fishery, that this may also be because vessels in the EPO surface fleet are not designed solely for the albacore troll fishery, and it may be important to develop catch or effort conversions from fleet to fleet. A participant also reminded participants of the Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act of 2016, which tasks the U.S. government in the

course of negotiations in the WCPFC to among other things minimize any disadvantages to U.S. fishermen in relation to any other members of the Commission and to maximize opportunities for U.S. vessels on the high seas. Some participants also stated that they felt specificity would be necessary to ensure that harvest strategies would be implemented as intended, though it may not be necessary to include individual allocations for each fleet group.

Participants generally supported retention of the 2002-2004 reference period for effort, and potentially 2009-2011 if an alternative timeframe was needed. Some participants expressed concern about the cyclical nature of fish populations, and potential repercussions of exceeding any limits agreed to, particularly from catch limits when fish are plentiful. NMFS noted that the current WCPFC and IATTC measures do not contain payback mechanisms, and that the benefit of a total allowable effort (TAE) is that vessels would be able to take advantage of increased biomass when it occurs. A participant stated that the United States should not support a baseline that would limit the United States, but instead should look to a baseline that would capture the highest years of catch to have a sufficient buffer to avoid issues related to overages.

On incidental catches, a participant noted that albacore catches in the longline fishery vary spatially and seasonally, and that historically albacore was caught by the fleet in the early 2000s in the Pacific Remote Island Areas National Monument. The longline fishery also benefits from high recruitment years so the longline fishery would like to preserve a good buffer in any limits considered. A participant asked whether there was a metric to define whether catches were target versus incidental, and another person noted that the United States provides adequate operational data that should discern the fleets that are targeting albacore. NMFS noted that some longline fleets (e.g., Hawaii and Korea) are known to not target albacore, but that other fleets (Japan and Chinese Taipei) do target albacore depending on the season and area.

Participants felt that expansion of fishing opportunities for North Pacific albacore should be allowed provided that it does not result in breaching the limit reference point. Another participant noted that the ISC has a paper that discusses possible options if biomass declines the biomass trigger. NMFS responded that fishing intensity can be converted into catch or effort metrics for each fleet, but another option would be to allocate fishing intensity by country and then each country to determine the allocations between its domestic fleets. Some participants felt that allocation should not be part of the harvest strategy. A participant noted that the Hawaii longline fleet is under a limited entry program, and is maxed out. As the surface fleet on the west coast has contracted over time, this participant stated that some buffers should be considered to allow that fleet to regrow.

On market needs, a participant noted that demand for Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified albacore has grown such that in the last five months there is a $600 gap in price between non-MSC albacore fish and MSC albacore fish. Because of this consumer preference which is also driven by large companies, the participant noted that it is important for RFMOs to adopt management procedures that address MSC certification. A participant expressed concern that

the United States often adopts policies that are not also followed by other countries to the detriment of U.S. fisheries.

Participants noted they would have concerns if revisions to the WCPFC management measure for North Pacific albacore resulted in a change to the geographic extent of the measure. Participants felt that management should apply to the full range of the North Pacific albacore stock, and noted that there is not an insignificant volume of North Pacific albacore catch between the equator and 20 degrees North.

Participants felt that additional information on how relative spawning stock biomass is determined and estimations of natural mortality from different age classes would be helpful to better understand the fishery impacts of different fleets. Another participant suggested that NMFS could share the ISC analysis describing potential TAC and TAE conversions and the implications of those different approaches based on the 2002-2004 reference period. A participant asked about data quality of catches of north Pacific albacore by China and NMFS noted that China has a limit of 10 fishing vessels targeting north Pacific albacore, and that currently most effort is focused on the south Pacific.

A participant suggested that the United States consider developing a harvest strategy as a conservation and management measure (CMM) in the WCPFC as has been done for skipjack in the WCPFC.

Criteria for Exceptional Circumstances

On the draft criteria to identify exceptional circumstances, a participant stated that there should be an awareness of non-fishery impacts (e.g., tariffs, removal of subsidies, etc.) that could affect the fishery, and did not want automatic management action to occur if action is not actually warranted. NMFS clarified that identification of exceptional circumstances does not automatically trigger a management response other than notification of the occurrence of an exceptional circumstance so there would be an opportunity to discuss whether a management change was warranted based on the circumstances. Another participant asked if large variations in spawning potential ratio (SPR) might trigger exceptional circumstances, and NOAA stated that uncertainty was included as part of the management strategy evaluation (MSE) model, but if there are significant differences, then scientists would need to investigate why results are departing from the MSE model predictions. Another participant noted that most of the criteria for exceptional circumstances are related to stock assessment issues, and that there would need to be a substantial issue to take management action outside of the harvest strategy because generally the desire is to maintain management consistent with what was tested in the MSE.

A participant noted that it could be useful to understand the tested range as for North Atlantic albacore, the protocol tested went all the way to stock collapse and did not trigger exceptional circumstances. This participant felt that it might be useful to have a default response if the stock gets very low. Another participant noted that exceptional circumstances seemed oriented

towards negative outcomes, but that exceptional circumstances could also be used to enact change if positive changes occur in the fishery that were outside the bound evaluated in the MSE.

Electronic logbook applications

Representatives from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission and the American Albacore Fishing Association gave a short overview of two electronic logbook applications that are currently under development and will be available for use for albacore troll vessels that operate in the north and south Pacific in the near future.

Next Steps

NMFS intends to continue to solicit input from the Permanent Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the WCPFC and General Advisory Committee and its Scientific Advisory Subcommittee to the U.S. Section to the IATTC. Based on input received from the June 2025 Council meeting and the aforementioned advisory bodies, the United States will consider its positions and potentially any proposals for meetings of the WCPFC Northern Committee (July 14-15, 2025) and the IATTC (September 1-5, 2025).

APPENDIX I

Background Document for 2025 U.S. Stakeholder Meeting on North Pacific Albacore Management

Prepared by WCR and PIRO staff

1. Meeting information

NMFS is hosting a NP albacore webinar on April 25, 2025 from 2-5 pm PDT (11 am- 2 pm HST).

2. Meeting Objectives:

The objectives for this meeting are listed below.

1. Gather stakeholder input on translating fishing intensity to management measures (e.g., catch, effort) in the harvest strategy.
2. Gather stakeholder input on criteria for identifying exceptional circumstances for the NPALB MSE that were developed by the ALBWG.
3. Provide an update on development of electronic logbooks.

3. Background

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) adopted a harvest strategy for north Pacific albacore (NPALB) in 2023 (i.e., IATTC Resolution C-23-02 and WCPFC Harvest Strategy 2023-01). This harvest strategy includes harvest control rules that mandate reductions in fishing intensity if the female spawning stock biomass (SSB) falls below the adopted reference points.

In 2023, the WCPFC NC and IATTC requested scientific advice from the Albacore Working Group (ALBWG) of the ISC on how fishing intensity could be interpreted to actual management measures under the harvest strategy, as well as the criteria for identifying exceptional circumstances developed by the ISC (see page 12 in the ISC 24 plenary report). In 2024, the NC indicated it would consider these documents and address the harvest strategy in 2025. This stakeholder webinar will provide an opportunity for U.S. stakeholders to discuss these options and share preferences with NMFS on future considerations for updating the harvest strategy at the NC and ensuing IATTC and WCPFC meetings.

4. Translating Fishing Intensity into Management Measures in the Harvest Strategy

ISC Advice

As noted above, both NC and IATTC requested the ISC to advise how fishing intensity could be interpreted to actual management measures under this harvest strategy. In 2024, the ISC produced *Scientific Advice On Interpreting The Fishing Intensity Metric From The North Pacific Albacore Tuna Harvest Strategies In Terms Of Catch And Effort Management Measures* (See SAC-15 INF-T). This document defines fishing intensity, spawning potential ratio (SPR), and

describes the analysis conducted by the ALBWG to evaluate fleet-specific relationships between fishing intensity and catch and/or effort. The following is a very short summary of the paper, and webinar participants are encouraged to read the paper for more detailed information.

- Fishing intensity is used in the NPALB stock assessment to measure the overall extent to which a stock is being exploited. For NPALB, fishing intensity is defined as $F_{\%SPR}$, which is the fishing intensity associated with a specific SPR.
- SPR is a measure of fishing mortality expressed as the decline in the proportion of the spawning stock biomass produced by each recruit relative to the unfished state.
- Fishing intensity and SPR are useful because they allow fishing mortality at various age classes to be related to impacts on spawning stock biomass (SSB) equivalence and compared using the same units.
- Although the 2023 NPALB stock assessment used a complex fleet structure of 35 fleets, the ALBWG recommended using a simplified approach for management with fleets grouped into fleet groups. As an example, the ALBWG used 9 fleet groupings dependent on gear and country to describe relationships between fleets and SPR.
- The ALBWG cautions that relationships between catch or effort and SPR could change if recruitment and/or fleet selectivity change substantially in the future, and these relationships should be reevaluated if SSB falls below the threshold or limit reference points, as it may be an indication of exceptional circumstances.
- All fleet groups showed strong relationships between catch and SPRs.
- The relationships between effort and SPR were found to be fleet specific and more variable. The surface fleets (EPO surface fleets and Japan pole and line) had moderately strong relationships. However, the relationships varied for the different longline fleets with some longline fleets showing moderate correlations (Japan and China) where others had much weaker relationships (US, Taiwan, Korea, Vanuatu and other miscellaneous fleets).

The Chair of the ALBWG presented a summary of this report to NC20, but many members requested additional time to review and discuss the analysis so NC20 agreed to revisit this issue at NC21. Additionally, Japan requested at NC20 that the ISC analyze the correlation between SPR and effort in Japanese albacore LL fisheries. The ALBWG has completed the analysis requested by Japan, and the results are anticipated to be included in an updated version of the paper produced in 2024. Generally, the ISC was able to identify stronger correlations between effort and SPR for some Japanese longline fleets fishing in specific geographic areas in specific time periods. Allocation rules will need to be provided by the (Regional Fishery Management Organization (RFMO) if further scientific advice on translating fishing intensities is to be provided by the ALBWG. These allocation rules could be based on a historical time period, or specific levels for each fleet or group of fleets, or some combination thereof, and the allocation units could be catch, effort, and/or SPR.

Fishing Intensity and the Harvest Strategy

As the existing harvest strategies for NPALB in the WCPFC and IATTC reference fishing intensity, both organizations recognize the importance of further defining fishing intensity to ensure there are clear metrics for management. Previously, U.S. stakeholders have opined a preference for the eastern Pacific ocean (EPO) surface fleet to be managed via effort, but that more discussion would be needed if there was a desire to further define effort (e.g., number of

vessels, fishing days. etc.). Currently, the harvest strategy uses the total overall SPR, and if there is a desire to refine management by fleets, further discussions may be needed to discuss how that is then reflected in the harvest strategy or in the CMM or Resolution that implement the harvest strategy.

Other Considerations

The current management (i.e., maintain albacore fishing effort at or below the average of 2002-2004) seems to be effective at maintaining the stock around the target reference point of 45% $F_{\%SPR}$. And importantly, has been dissuading other countries from increasing albacore effort. One major risk is that if country-specific allocations are provided, countries may look to increase those allocations. The stock would be able to handle increased fishing effort from current levels but increased longline effort and catch on juveniles would likely impact eastern Pacific ocean (EPO) surface CPUE.

The current NPALB Resolution (C-23-02) needs to adopt catch and/or effort controls in order to be considered "implemented" and satisfy new Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification requirements that will begin in 2030.

Focus Questions For Translating Fishing Intensity into Management Measures:

1) **Do you have a preference for how fishing intensity is translated (i.e., total allowable catch, total allowable effort or a mixed approach)? If effort is preferred, do you have a preference for how effort should be managed (e.g., fishing days, number of fishing vessels)? How specific do you think the harvest strategy should be in discussing fishing intensity?**

2) **Do you support the 2002-2004 reference year period? Or is another reference period desirable?**

3) **Do you have suggestions on how to address incidental catch of NPALB from fisheries not targeting albacore (e.g., catch limit, *de minimis* clause)?**

4) **How should the harvest strategy address expansion and contraction of fishing opportunities? Should the harvest strategy speak to allocation or should allocation be addressed in the CMM/Resolution?**

5) **What is needed from a harvest strategy and/or RFMOs to effectively address market and consumer preferences?**

6) **Are there concerns if the WCPFC CMM for NP albacore was restricted to north of 20°N?**

7) **What other data or information would be useful to help you effectively weigh in on these topics?**

8) **Are there other changes or modifications to the harvest strategy that should be considered at this time?**

5. Exceptional Circumstances

In conducting Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE) to test harvest strategies, many assumptions are made on data availability as well as on general conditions in the ocean and life history parameters for the fish in question. "Exceptional circumstances" are circumstances beyond those evaluated in the MSE process, and identification of exceptional circumstances may result in the need to initiate another MSE and/or to consider a different process than what was agreed to in the harvest strategy or harvest control rule.

Both the IATTC and WCPFC in their harvest strategies in 2023 included provisions directing staff to work with the ISC to develop criteria for identification of exceptional circumstances (see para 1e C-23-02 and HS 2023-01). The ensuing recommendations from the ISC are found in SAC-15 INF-S (*Criteria for identifying exceptional circumstances for North Pacific Albacore tuna*). The NC is planning to review these recommendations at its meeting in July 2025.

Exceptional circumstances are an essential component of well developed harvest strategies and multiple examples can be found in other RFMOs. Both the harvest strategies adopted for North Atlantic Albacore (NA ALB) in ICCAT **(Annex 2 of 2021-04-e)** and for skipjack in the WCPFC (Annex IV of **CMM 2022-01**) include provisions on exceptional circumstances. The exceptional circumstances protocol for NA ALB is detailed in terms of the process for identifying exceptional circumstances, indicators to consider, actions to trigger alternative management or potential adjustments to the stock assessment or harvest strategy, and a timeline of when checks and actions should occur. In contrast, the exceptional circumstances protocol for skipjack in the WCPFC is more generally described and less prescriptive. In both cases, the scientific bodies of the respective Commissions are tasked with monitoring and identifying if exceptional circumstances exist and providing advice to the commission on recommended courses of action.

Focus Questions on Exceptional Circumstances:

9) **Should any exceptional circumstances be added/removed/modified?**

10) **Do you need any additional information on exceptional circumstances?**

6. Electronic Logbooks

Over the past several years, funding for development of electronic logbooks focused on the hook and line fleet in the EPO have been awarded to 2 separate groups. The Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission has been working with the Southwest Fisheries Science Center and Archipelago Marine Research Ltd. on one app, the "NOAA/PSMFC Elogbook" (aka FishVue Float). The app is already in use by the west coast groundfish non-trawl fleet and is aiming to be fully deployed for the HMS surface fleet in time for the 2025 fishing season.

Another app is being developed by the American Albacore Fishing Association (AAFA), the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, and Bluefin Data LLC. This app is currently still being tested by a small group of vessels, but is expected to be available to the entire fleet by the 2026 fishing season.

These electronic logbook apps are optional for use in the EPO. Fishermen may continue to use the paper logbooks they have traditionally used.

NMFS also notes that these apps have been developed to be compatible for use in the southern hemisphere by vessels that harvest South Pacific albacore. Note that CMM 2022-06 requires vessels to use electronic logbooks on the high seas in the WCPFC convention area, and NMFS is currently considering plans to implement this requirement.

As the electronic logbooks become available for use, NMFS will update the West Coast Region Highly Migratory Species Logbook webpage with details on how to download and use the apps.

7. Next Steps

NMFS will develop a summary of this meeting, which will be shared with participants. There will be additional opportunities for input on NPALB at the WCPFC Permanent Advisory Committee on May 28, 2025, the Pacific Fishery Management Council at its June meeting (June 12-18) and from the IATTC General Advisory Committee and Scientific Advisory Subcommittee at their meeting in early August 2025. The 21st Meeting of the Northern Committee (NC21) will take place on July 14-15, 2025, and the 103rd Meeting of the IATTC will take place on September 1-5, 2025.

GLOSSARY

ALBWG - The ISC Working Group for north Pacific albacore made up of members from coastal states and fishing entities of the region and members from relevant intergovernmental fishery organizations. The Albacore Working Group regularly assesses and analyses fishery and other relevant information to determine the stock status of the north Pacific albacore tuna, and to provide scientific information concerning conservation needs.

EPO - eastern Pacific Ocean

Exceptional Circumstances - Rare and unforeseen events that were not tested by the MSE or that the harvest strategy was not designed to manage. If monitoring indicates the harvest strategy is not meeting objectives, that can also be an exceptional circumstance.

F% SPR - The lifetime contribution of spawning output (e.g., eggs) that a recruit is expected to provide under the stated fishing mortality relative to its lifetime production without fishing. Often expressed as a percentage. For example, SPR50% means that under the specified fishing mortality rate, a recruit will, on average, produce half the eggs in its lifetime that it would have produced without fishing.

Harvest Strategy - AKA Management Procedure. A pre-agreed framework for making fisheries management decisions, such as setting catch limits, that has been simulation-tested using MSE and designed to achieve specific management objectives. A harvest strategy typically includes a data collection program, stock status estimation method, and harvest control rule (HCR).

ICCAT - International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

IATTC - Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, Resolution. The international commission responsible for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of tuna and tuna-like species and other species of fish in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Members adopt resolutions by consensus. For example, Resolutions C-18-03 and C-23-02.

ISC - The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC). Established for the purpose of enhancing scientific research and cooperation for conservation and rational utilization of tuna and tuna-like species (HMS) of the North Pacific Ocean.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) - an international non-profit that oversees certification and labeling of seafood. Depending on when certification was acquired, MSC certification eventually requires the adoption of harvest strategies that have adopted and implemented catch or effort constraints.

Northern Committee (NC) - a sub-group within the WCPFC. It was established to specifically focus on the conservation and management of highly migratory species in the northern part of the WCPFC Convention Area.

PIRO - Pacific Islands Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries

RFMO - Regional Fishery Management Organization (Ex: IATTC, WCPFC,ICCAT).

TAC - Total Allowable Catch.

TAE - Total Allowable Effort

WCPO - western and central Pacific Ocean

WCPFC - Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission for the WCPO. Members adopt Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs). For example, CMM 2019-03.

WCR - West Coast Region of NOAA Fisheries

APPENDIX II

U.S. Stakeholder Meeting - Translating Fishing Intensity, Exceptional Circumstances, and E-Logbooks for North Pacific Albacore

April 25, 2025

Meeting Logistics

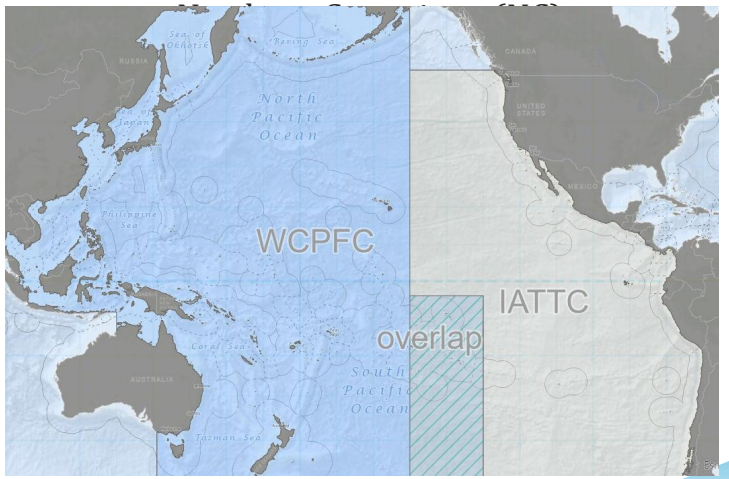
- Please mute when not speaking
- Raise your hand if you would like to speak
- Please state your name and affiliation when speaking
- We will solicit comment after specific sections. Focus questions are contained within the background paper for this meeting.

Meeting Outline

- Introduction
- Background
- Stakeholder Discussion and Input
  - Translating Fishing Intensity
  - Exceptional Circumstances
  - Electronic Logbooks
- Next Steps

Background - International Management of NPALB

International management of North Pacific albacore (NPALB) shared between
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) &
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)



Background timeline

2005

- WCPFC NC and IATTC adopted effort limits (average of 2002-2004) for fisheries fishing for NP ALB

2014

- WCPFC NC adopted a precautionary management framework for NP albacore, which was renamed as a harvest strategy in 2017.

2015-2021

- ISC conducts a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for NP albacore, as requested by WCPFC NC and IATTC

Background timeline

2022-2023

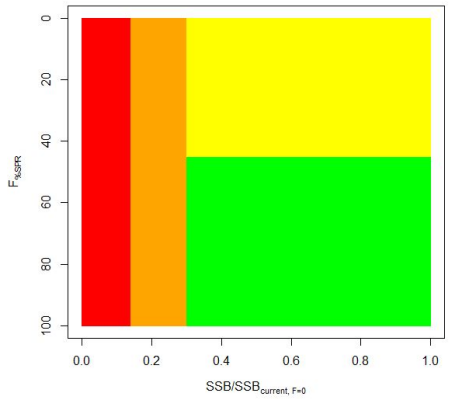
- NMFS stakeholder webinars in 2022 and 2023
- The WCPFC and the IATTC adopted a harvest strategy for NPALB in 2022, and revised the harvest strategy in 2023.
- NC requested ISC to advise how fishing intensity could be interpreted to management measures under the harvest strategy and to develop criteria for identification of exceptional circumstances.

2024

- NC members requested additional time to review the fishing intensity analysis and agreed to defer discussion of exceptional circumstances to 2025

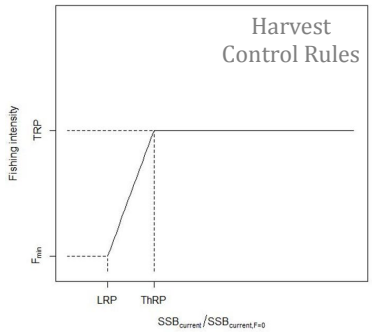
Background - Harvest Strategy

- Management Objectives
- Reference Points
  - Target: F45%
  - Threshold: 30%$SSB_{current,F=0}$
  - Limit: 14%$SSB_{current,F=0}$
  - Fmin: F87%
- Acceptable Levels of Risk
  - <20% Risk



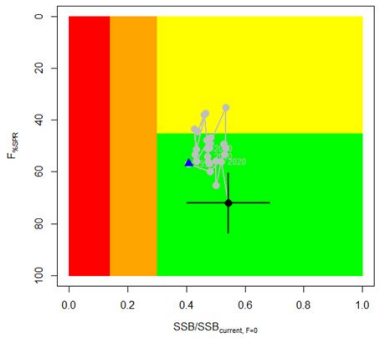
Background - Harvest Strategy

- Monitoring Strategy
  - Stock Assessment
  - ISC evaluate for exceptional circumstances
- Harvest Control Rules
- Other Provisions
  - Performance Review of Harvest Strategy in 2030 and 2033



Background - Harvest Strategy

- Fishing with a fishing intensity of F45% is expected to result in a SSB around 45%$SSB_{current,F=0}$ over the long run
- 2023 assessment shows current fishing intensity is below F45% ($F_{\%SPR,2018-2021}$ = 59%) and SSB is above 30%$SSB_{current,F=0}$



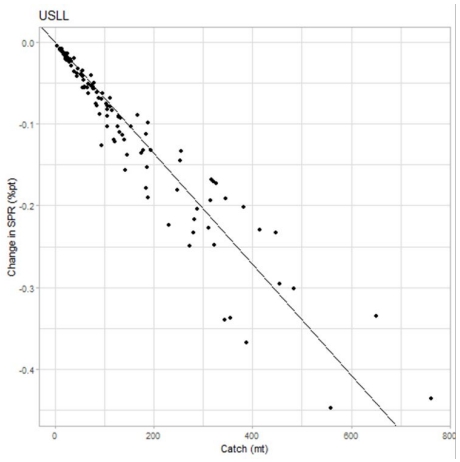
Meeting Objectives

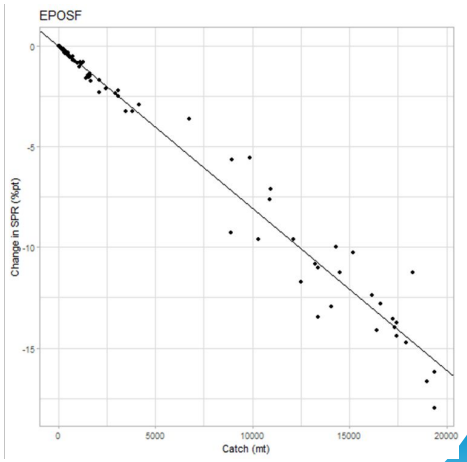
1. Input on translating fishing intensity to management measures in the harvest strategy
2. Input on draft criteria for identifying exceptional circumstances
3. Introduction to e-log applications

Interpretation of Fishing Intensity

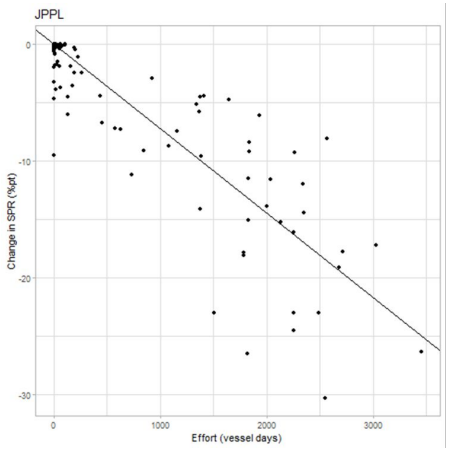
- Fishing intensity (in SPR) used in TRP and HCRs but RFMOs typically use catch and/or effort limits
- Together with IATTC Staff, the ISC ALBWG developed advice in 2024 [SAC-15-INF-T] on translating fishing intensity into catch (all fleets) and/or effort (only EPOSF, JPPL & ALB-targeting JPLL) and updated in 2025
- ISC ALBWG developed method to calculate historical fleet-specific share of fishing intensity and estimate future allocations of fishing intensity, if RFMOs provide a reference period or specify shares of specific fleets
- Reviews by ISC Plenary in June 2024 & 2025.
- NPALB harvest strategies (catch/effort)
- ISC24 Albacore

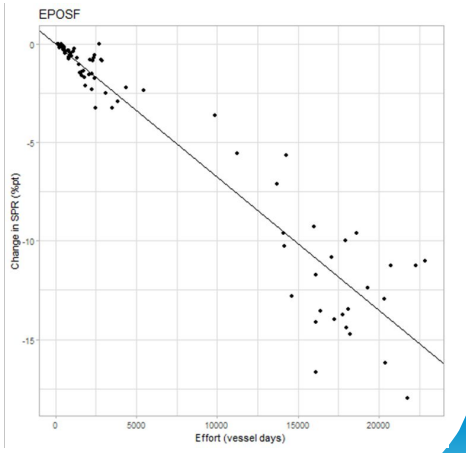
Translating Fishing Intensity into Catch



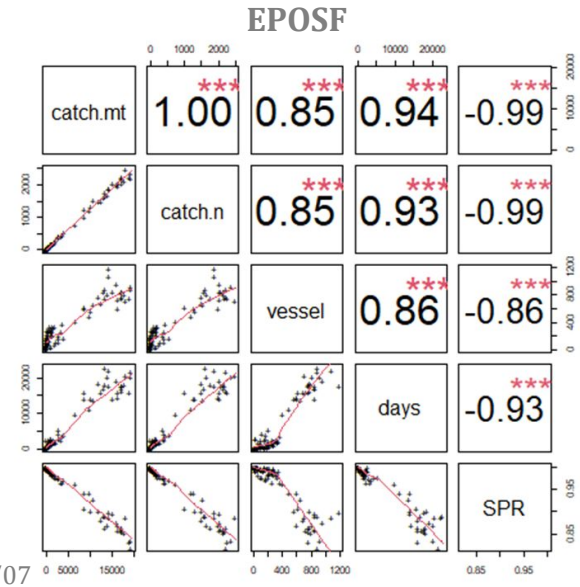


Translating Fishing Intensity into Effort





Translating Fishing Intensity into Effort



Teo et al. 2024
ISC/24/ALBWG-1/07
https://isc.fra.go.jp/reports/alb/alb_2024_1.html

Fishing Intensity - Conclusions

- Strong relationships between $F_{\%SPR}$ and catch for all fleets but JPPL and EPOSF slightly more variable
- Relationships between $F_{\%SPR}$ and effort are more variable and less correlated but EPOSF, JPPL, and ALB-targeting parts of JPLL have moderately strong relationships
- For EPOSF effort, number of vessel-days have stronger relationship but number of vessels also have moderately strong relationship

Fishing Intensity - Conclusions

- ISC ALBWG can calculate fleet-specific allocations or limits based on catch, effort, and/or SPRs but RFMOs will need to provide allocation rules
- Examples:
  - allocations based on historical or current period
  - specific catch and/or effort amounts for each fleet or country
  - allocations only kick in if reference point is breached (e.g., SSB < ThRP)
  - SPR-based allocations so that each country can determine how to reach fleet-specific SPR, based on advice from ISC

Fishing Intensity - Conclusions

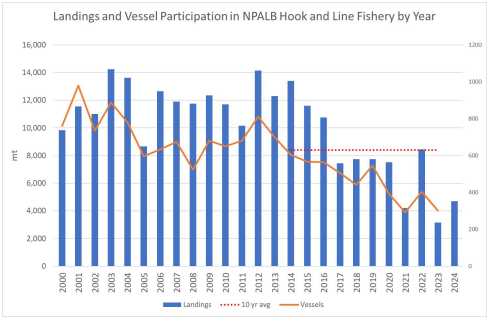
- Current regulations of IATTC (Resolution C-05-02) & WCPFC (CMM2019-03) set NPALB effort at or below 2002-2004 levels, which has in turn maintained NPALB fishing intensity around or below the TRP of F45%
- Relationships between $F_{\%SPR}$ and catch and/or effort will likely change if stock conditions (e.g., recruitment, selectivity, availability) changes
- Re-evaluate relationships if reference points are breached (i.e., SSB < 30%$SSB_{current, F=0}$ or 14%$SSB_{current, F=0}$) or if exceptional circumstances are identified

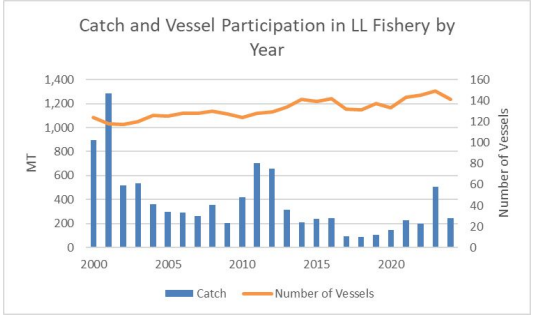
Focus Question #1

- **Do you have a preference for how fishing intensity is translated (i.e., total allowable catch, total allowable effort or a mixed approach)?**
- **If effort is preferred, do you have a preference for how effort should be managed (e.g., fishing days, number of fishing vessels)?**
- **How specific do you think the harvest strategy should be in discussing fishing intensity?**

Focus Question #2

- **Do you support the 2002-2004 reference year period? Or is another reference period desirable?**





Focus Question #3

- **Do you have suggestions on how to address incidental catch of NPALB from fisheries not targeting albacore (e.g., catch limit, de minimis clause)?**

Focus Question #4

- **How should the harvest strategy address expansion and contraction of fishing opportunities? Should the harvest strategy speak to allocation or should allocation be addressed in the CMM/Resolution?**

Focus Question #5

- **What is needed from a harvest strategy and/or RFMOs to effectively address market and consumer preferences?**

Focus Question #6

- **Are there concerns if the WCPFC CMM for NP ALB was restricted to north of 20°N?**

Year	% Weight	% Num. Fish	Year	% Weight	% Num. Fish
2001	21	10	2011	17	9
2002	13	6	2012	16	8
2003	12	5	2013	14	7
2004	8	4	2014	12	6
2005	14	7	2015	17	9
2006	13	7	2016	16	8
2007	7	3	2017	19	10
2008	12	6	2018	21	10
2009	12	7	2019	26	13
2010	19	11	2020	11	5

Approximate percent of weight (mt) and number of fish of NP ALB caught 0-30 degrees N in 2001-2020

Focus Question #7

- **What other data or information would be useful to help you effectively weigh in on these topics?**

Focus Question #8

- **Are there other changes or modifications to the harvest strategy that should be considered at this time?**

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Exceptional Circumstances

Recall the current agreement (from HS 2023-01)

- *"When performing a stock assessment, the ISC will consider if* ***the biology, environmental conditions, data sources, status of the stock, and/or other underlying assumptions have changed substantially enough to warrant revisiting the components in this harvest strategy."***
- ISC was requested to develop "***criteria for the identification of exceptional circumstances***"

Exceptional Circumstances

- The ISC ALBWG completed criteria for identifying exceptional circumstances for north Pacific albacore tuna [SAC-15-INF-S]
- Updated criteria based on implementation of adopted HCRs in 2023
- The ISC ALBWG plans to review this document periodically

Exceptional Circumstances - ICCAT NA ALB and WCPFC Skipjack Tunas Harvest Strategies

NA ALB

- Tasks science body to monitor for pre-agreed exceptional circumstances (ECs)
- Protocols Commission *must* then follow (e.g., science body advises specific TAC)

WCPO Skipjack

- Directs science body to review for ECs
- Provides examples of ECs
- Protocol = science body advises Commission potential next steps

Element	Indicator	Range	Eval. Sched.
Stock and Fleet Dynamics	Depletion stock biomass ($SSB/SSB_{current, F=0}$)	Estimates in any year falling outside the range of uncertainty simulated by the operating models (OMs) used in the most recent MSE (accepted by the ALBWG in 2021)	Benchmark stock assessment (every 3 yrs)
	Fishing intensity (F%SPR) where SPR is the spawning potential ratio		
	Changes in fleet dynamics	Any substantial differences from the structure and parameterization used in the OMs of the most recent MSE (accepted by the ALBWG in 2021)	As new evidence and research is presented and accepted by the ALBWG
	Biological Parameters		
Application	Stock Assessment	Stock assessment is not producible or estimates are unreliable	Benchmark stock assessment (every 3 yrs)
Implementation	Fishing intensity (F%SPR)	The fishing intensity is different from what is prescribed by the HCR, given the uncertainty range simulated by the most recent MSE (accepted by the ALBWG in 2021)	Benchmark stock assessment (every 3 yrs)
	Realized Catch or Effort	If a TAC/TAE is implemented and the realized catch or effort exceeds the TAC/TAE by greater than 20%	Benchmark stock assessment (every 3 yrs)

NOAA FISHERIES

Focus Question #9 - Exceptional Circumstances

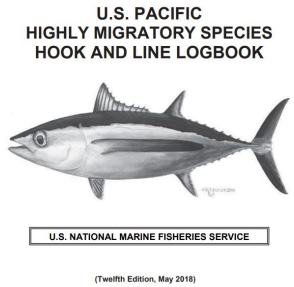
- Would you recommend that any exceptional circumstances be added/removed/modified?

Focus Question #10 - Exceptional Circumstances

- **Do you need any additional information on exceptional circumstances?**

Electronic Logbooks

- 2 electronic logbook apps are currently under development for use
- NMFS WCR will update the WCR HMS logbook webpage



Focus Question #11 - Electronic Logbooks

- **What questions do you have about electronic logbooks?**

Next Steps

Other opportunities for input:

- Permanent Advisory Committee (PAC) to the WCPFC - May 28, 2025
- Pacific Fishery Management Council - June 2025
- 21st meeting of the Northern Committee - July 14-15, 2025
  - Proposal deadline June 25, 2025
- General Advisory Committee and Scientific Advisory Subcommittee (SAS/GAC) to the IATTC - August, 2025

Thank you!

Questions?

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