

SPECIAL PROJECT 1: IF, THEN MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR BLUEFIN TUNA TRIP LIMITS

Special Project 1, Adaptive Management and Flexibility, is one of three projects for which the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) received dedicated funding as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. The project's objective is to identify innovations that make review and implementation of Council actions more timely, efficient, and responsive to a changing ocean environment and other unexpected events. At its September 2025 meeting, the Council identified three priority areas to advance under this project and directed staff to develop plans for their implementation. One priority area is "If-then" statements and inseason management actions for Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) where they make sense to allow for action to happen outside of a Council meeting.

At the April 2026 Council meeting, the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) recommended consideration of a Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) trip limit design that would increase the initial trip limit for PBF if there is a significant underutilization of the U.S. catch limit is anticipated (H.1.a, Supplemental [HMSAS Report 1](#)). The U.S. PBF trip limits already have "if-then" scenarios built into the design, in that the trip limits are subject to in-season changes when catches reach certain trigger (or 'reduction') points. However, this design anticipates *reducing* trip limits to ensure that catches do not exceed catch limits but does not anticipate *increasing* trip limits inseason. As part of its discussion of Special Project 1, the Council considered advisory body recommendations and prioritized the Groundfish and Highly Migratory Species FMPs for this exercise.

At the June Council meeting, Council staff worked with members of the HMS Management Team and HMSAS to brainstorm additional ideas under Special Project 1, and to discuss the feasibility of the HMSAS-proposed trip limit design modification. The proposed September Council meeting agenda ([C.5, Attachment 2](#)) included "HMS If-then PPAs if possible" under the Cross-FMP agenda item. Because the proposed trip limit modifications were HMS-specific, a stand-alone HMS agenda item was subsequently added to the September agenda.

Notably, the current trip limit design already is an "if-then" approach. It allows for flexible, responsive, adaptive management as envisioned by Special Project 1. In November 2024, the Council considered three trip limit options with different initial trip limits of 50 mt, 60 mt, and 75 mt. Each option includes trip limit reduction triggers to ensure harvest opportunities remain for non-purse seine gears through the season and to avoid exceeding the season's catch limit. These trip limit options were analyzed under a National Marine Fisheries Service [Programmatic Environmental Assessment](#). The Council recommended the middle option, which is currently in place. Further action that falls within the options already analyzed (e.g., moving to the option with a 75 mt initial trip limit) could mean a relatively easy lift. However, exploring options not already analyzed could mean greater workload and analysis. If the Council moves ahead to further action at the November meeting, the options considered under this agenda item will need to be refined and evaluated for feasibility.

Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 1 briefly summarizes the history of PBF trip limits, includes a purpose and need statement, and proposes several options for consideration. The Council should consider adopting a purpose and need, a range of alternatives, provide direction on trip limit design options, and provide further direction as appropriate.

Council Tasks:

- 1. Adopt Purpose and Need.**
- 2. Adopt Range of Alternatives.**
- 3. Provide Direction on Further Consideration of Trip Limit Modifications.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item I.1, Attachment 1: Highly Migratory Species Trip Limit Flexibility and Modified If/Then Scenarios.
2. If received, public comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- I.1 Special Project 1: If, Then Management Measures for Kerry Griffin, Gilly Lyons
Bluefin Tuna Trip Limits
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives

PFMC
8/28/2026