

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (HMS) ACTIVITIES

This report provides an update on recent international meetings related to HMS. This includes meetings of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee Joint Working Group (JWG) on Pacific Bluefin Tuna, the Northern Committee, as well as the U.S. meetings for the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAS) and General Advisory Committee (GAC) to the IATTC. The report also discusses roles and priorities for the upcoming IATTC annual meeting and provides a list of upcoming international meetings.

Joint Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF)

The 10th Session of the Joint IATTC and WCPFC-NC Working Group Meeting on the Management of Pacific bluefin tuna (JWG-10) was held July 9-12, 2025. The meeting was co-Chaired by Mr. Josh Madeira (USA, IATTC) and Mr. Masanori Miyahara (Japan, Northern Committee Chair). Key topics of discussion included options for long-term harvest strategy and harvest control rules (HCRs) for PBF, country fishing activities as well as recreational catch. The summary report for this meeting is available [here](#), and a detailed summary of the recent Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) which analyzed and compared 16 potential HCRs is [here](#).

Northern Committee

The 21st Regular Session of the Northern Committee (NC21) took place in Toyama, Japan, on July 14 and 15, 2025. This meeting discussed the conservation and management measures of highly migratory northern stocks, including PBF, North Pacific albacore, North Pacific swordfish, and North Pacific striped marlin. See the [NC21 summary report](#) and [meeting webpage](#) for more information. Key outcomes of the meeting are outlined below.

- North Pacific Albacore
 - NC21 agreed to use the criteria to identify exceptional circumstances as developed by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species (ISC). These exceptional circumstances will continue to be reviewed and updated as other components of the North Pacific albacore harvest strategy continue to evolve.
 - NC21 also requested ISC to provide information on fleet-specific reductions if female spawning stock biomass were to drop below the Threshold Reference Point based on fishing intensity during the time periods of 2002-2004 and 1999-2015. The 2002-2004 reference year period was a U.S. request as it is what is currently used to limit effort per Resolution C-05-02. Canada requested inclusion of the 1999-2015 period as this was the time period used to simulate catch ratios in future projections in the MSE.
- North Pacific Swordfish: The ISC stated that it lacked capacity to conduct an MSE and suggested that an MSE could be completed over a 5-year period if funds for a consultant

could be secured. The United States offered to provide a technical analyst and NC agreed to initiate work on an MSE for WCNP swordfish. The NC tasked the ISC with developing a workplan for NC22's consideration, and NC also tasked itself to discuss candidate operational management objectives in 2026.

- North Pacific striped marlin: ISC provided an update on the rebuilding analysis for North Pacific striped marlin, as requested by WCPFC21. Noting this is not a northern stock, NC did not provide any recommendations related to this analysis.

U.S. meetings of the SAS and GAC

The 18th meeting of the SAS, and the 33rd meeting of the GAC to the U.S. section of the IATTC, were held virtually on July 30 and 31, 2025. The IATTC scientific staff presented new stock assessment information on yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean, fisheries information from 2024, as well as staff recommendations for the Commission to consider in 2025. NMFS staff presented draft U.S. proposals to the IATTC, including tropical tuna, silky sharks, High Seas Boardings and Inspections, as well as discussed potentially co-sponsoring a proposal with Korea for protection of cetaceans in purse seine and longline fisheries similar to the measure adopted in the WCPFC. The SAS and GAC supported the U.S. proposals and developed recommendations to the U.S. Section of the IATTC for the upcoming meeting.

IATTC annual meeting

The 103rd Meeting of the IATTC will take place from September 1 to 5, 2025, in Panama City, Panama. See the [meeting webpage](#) for more information, including all proposals. The United States put forward the following proposals for the meeting.

- Tropical tuna
 - Because IATTC staff were able to produce a reliable [yellowfin tuna benchmark assessment](#) in the EPO this year, and the assessment shows the stock is not fishing above F_{MSY} , provisions of Paragraph 46 in [Resolution C-24-01](#) that relate to re-evaluating the management measures have been triggered. Resolution C-24-01 was adopted last year and is a two year measure that rolled over the previous Resolution on tropical tuna management measures. The United States submitted a proposal to the IATTC to extend Resolution C-24-01 for an additional year (through 2027) and includes options to continue or modify the bigeye tuna Enhanced Monitoring Program. The proposal also contains several potential new provisions: (1) defining large circle hook size (connected to the sea turtle Resolution [C-19-04](#)), (2) longline data submission requirements (also similar to those submitted last year), and (3) buoy deactivation adjustments to support FAD recovery around French Polynesia.
- High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI)
 - Similar to the proposal the U.S. submitted in 2016, the United States submitted a proposal to the IATTC to create an HSBI program in the IATTC Convention Area. The proposal is drafted to be consistent with the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA; e.g., [Articles 21 and 22](#)) as well as HSBI conservation management

measures (CMM) for three other Pacific Ocean RFMOs – WCPFC ([CMM 2006-08](#)), SPRFMO ([CMM 11-2023](#)), and NPFC ([CMM 2024-09](#)).

- Silky sharks
 - The United States submitted a proposal to the IATTC to extend the current silky shark Resolution ([C-23-08](#)) for three more years. This Resolution requires IATTC countries to report all catch data for silky sharks, including observed number and status of any silky sharks caught and released. Additionally, it prohibits retaining on board, transshipping, landing, or storing, in part or whole, carcasses of silky sharks caught by purse seine vessels in the Convention Area. This Resolution was first adopted in 2016 ([C-16-06](#)) and has been extended three times in 2019, 2021 and 2023.
- Protection of cetaceans in purse seine and longline fishing operations
 - The U.S. is co-sponsoring a proposal with Korea similar to the measure adopted last year in the WCPFC for protection of cetaceans ([CMM-2024-07](#)). The proposal prohibits all longline and purse seine vessels from harvesting, retaining on board, transshipping, or landing any cetacean or part of a cetacean caught in the Convention Area. The measure would also require longline vessels to report interactions with cetaceans and includes guidance for safe handling and release.

The United States continues to serve in Chair roles in the IATTC—Rachael Wadsworth (NMFS West Coast Region) is currently the Chair of the Administration and Finance Committee, Dr. Yonat Swimmer (NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office) is co-Chair of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group, and Colin Brinkman (Department of State) serves as co-Chair of the Electronic Monitoring Working Group.

The following is a list of upcoming international meetings related to the WCPFC.

Upcoming meetings in 2025-2026

WCPFC	
First South Pacific Albacore Management Workshop	September 11 - 12, 2025 (virtual)
Technical and Compliance Committee	September 23 - 30, 2025 (Federated States of Micronesia)
22nd Regular Session of the Commission	December 1 - 5, 2025 (Manila, Philippines)
Joint Working Group 11 & Northern Committee 22	<i>Tentatively</i> July 8 - 14, 2026 (Japan)