

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel (HMSAS) recommends that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) communicate the following points to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding international management activities and upcoming negotiations.

The Council encourages NMFS to support and prioritize:

- **further intersessional work by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) - Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Joint Working Group (JWG) on the Management of Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) to facilitate adoption of the long-term harvest strategy in 2026;**
- **prioritize a JWG Intersessional meeting dedicated to the adoption of a PBF long-term harvest strategy;**
- **additional outreach and/or workshops with U.S. fisheries stakeholders to advance the North Pacific albacore harvest strategy, including translating fishing intensity to management controls and adoption of exceptional circumstances;**
- **continued participation in the new South Pacific albacore joint working group to ensure adequate progress in advancing the negotiations and representation of U.S. interests; and**
- **Communicate to the U.S. Delegation to the IATTC the importance of ensuring progress is made on circle hooks as part of future IATTC negotiations.**

The HMSAS received a briefing on international management activities from Rachael Wadsworth. Members of the HMSAS have been monitoring and/or attending the various international meetings that occurred throughout 2025, and particularly in the last few months.

Pacific bluefin tuna

Preliminary reports from fishermen indicate that catches of larger sizes of PBF are lower this year, compared to recent years, so there are some concerns from the commercial fleet. This trend may be influenced by increased catches by Mexico. The HMSAS will continue to review these observations and share further recommendations as we approach upcoming JWG negotiations.

We note the significance of holding the JWG intersessional meeting at the Monterey Bay Aquarium last February as this was the first time in many years that the meeting was held in the Eastern Pacific region and allowed significant participation by U.S. stakeholders.

This summer, the JWG-10 meeting focused on discussion of 16 candidate harvest control rules (HCRs) for the long-term harvest strategy, including eight that included a 70:30 (West-East) harvest allocation. The West-East allocation of PBF is an issue of particular interest to U.S. stakeholders and needs further discussion in the context of the long-term harvest strategy. Reporting of recreational fisheries was once again a topic of conversation at JWG-10. Several

countries report little to no recreational catch of PBF but appear to have significant recreational fisheries. This is in stark contrast to the U.S. that has a very robust data collection on recreational catches. NMFS should continue to support monitoring and oversight by JWG member countries to level the playing field for U.S. recreational fishermen.

North Pacific albacore

The HMSAS was pleased to hear from industry members that U.S. commercial and recreational albacore fleets are having a better than average year as opposed to very slow fishing in recent years.

There was some discussion on North Pacific albacore at the WCPFC Northern Committee 21 meeting in Japan but countries were not ready to complete the long-term harvest strategy due to further work needed on exceptional circumstances and the translation of fishing intensity to management controls. The HMSAS requests additional guidance from NMFS regarding the timing for further meetings to advance these elements of the harvest strategy ahead of next year's negotiations.

South Pacific albacore

The HMSAS appreciates the efforts by NMFS (both the West Coast region and the Pacific Islands region) to contribute to a new joint working group on South Pacific albacore tuna. This fishery is seasonally important to the U.S. West Coast fleet and we support NMFS's continued engagement with the WCPFC and IATTC to advance the long-term harvest strategy and implementation measures according to the best available science and in the interests of the U.S. albacore fleet.

Tropical tunas / IATTC

The HMSAS was pleased to receive information regarding the recent IATTC annual meeting outcomes and the adoption of a revised tropical tuna measure. The HMSAS appreciates the efforts of the U.S. delegation to ensure that the final measure included key provisions to minimize the reduction in closure days, improve fish aggregating devices retrieval, and adopt a budget that included funds for the integrated port sampling program and the tuna tagging program that is needed to maintain a reliable assessment for skipjack tuna.

Regarding circle hooks, the HMSAS reiterates our concern (see June 2025 Agenda Item F.2.a Supplemental [HMSAS Report 1](#)) about the lack of progress at IATTC, and encourages the U.S. delegation to take a strong position on the need to make progress on circle hooks in future meetings.

PFMC
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