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

IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) SAC meeting will be held June 8-12, 2026, in La Jolla, California. Meeting information including the IATTC staff's conservation recommendations are posted online here. The IATTC scientific staff completed an update on the bigeye tuna stock assessment in the eastern Pacific Ocean with data through 2025 (Document SAC-17-03). The results of the risk assessment summarized across the thirty six reference models showed a 0.3% probability that the average fishing mortality in 2023-2025 exceeds the target reference point associated with the MSY (median $F/Fmsy = 0.52$). In addition, the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species (ISC) completed the preliminary results of the 2026 North Pacific albacore stock assessment, which notes the stock is likely not experiencing overfishing relative to the adopted target reference point ($F45_{\%SPR}$).

North Pacific swordfish stakeholder webinar

NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) hosted a virtual webinar on April 22nd to gather feedback on potential inputs for the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE). Based on the feedback from this session, the United States may propose candidate inputs for a North Pacific Swordfish MSE at the upcoming Northern Committee meeting in July. At this meeting, the Northern Committee tasked the ISC to develop a work plan for conducting the next MSE in 2026. The 2023 stock assessment for North Pacific Swordfish used new stock boundaries, so the geographic scope of the upcoming MSE is still undetermined, which includes how the catch of swordfish in the eastern Pacific Ocean will be addressed.

Two approaches to the swordfish MSE are currently under consideration, either (1) a coordinated, Pacific-wide approach similar to the process followed with Pacific bluefin tuna, or (2) a fragmented approach whereby the western Pacific moves forward with the MSE and makes assumptions in the model regarding eastern Pacific catch. Moving forward, NMFS will continue to solicit stakeholder input, so the United States can best consider its positions at the upcoming Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee meeting. The full meeting summary for this webinar is included as Agenda Item G.2 Supplemental Attachment 1.

North Pacific albacore stakeholder webinar

NMFS West Coast Region and PIRO hosted the 2nd U.S. stakeholder webinar of 2026 virtually on Thursday, May 21st. The intent of this meeting was to present the preliminary results of the 2026 North Pacific albacore stock assessment and ISC estimates of the historical impact of fleet groups and to gather stakeholder input on views to potentially revise the WCPFC/IATTC harvest strategy/management. NMFS is currently preparing a meeting summary from this webinar and planning to submit as a late supplemental report under this agenda item.