

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

In September 2025, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) submitted recommendations to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding priority international management activities and recommendations to inform the U.S. Permanent Advisory Committee (PAC) on issues related to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). Due to the government shutdown, the PAC was unable to meet but the Council's recommendations remain very important for upcoming international matters, including the 22nd Meeting of the WCPFC and other consultations that will inform key decisions in 2026. **The HMSAS recommends that the Council submit the September 2025 international recommendations ([D.2.a Supplemental HMSAS Report 1](#)) and the following points to the U.S. delegation that reflect key priorities for West Coast fisheries.**

Pacific bluefin tuna

Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) has emerged as one of the most important and relatively stable fishing opportunities for commercial and recreational fisheries in recent years. The stock recovery has been a great achievement and there are observations of the stock expanding its range into Oregon, Washington and beyond.

Despite this positive news, there are some concerns coming from fishermen in Southern California. Specifically, there are concerns that the significant increase in quotas elsewhere may be limiting availability of larger, premium sizes of PBF that are important to build the market for U.S.-caught PBF. Stakeholders are eager to see results of the next stock assessment (2027).

Given these developments, the HMSAS recommends that the U.S. delegation:

- **Continue to prioritize engagement through the IATTC- WCPFC Joint Working Group (JWG) to advance a precautionary long-term harvest strategy, including consideration of appropriate reference points and a harvest control rule.**
- **Confirm the next JWG intersessional meeting to advance negotiations, ideally in California to facilitate participation by U.S. stakeholders.**
- **Utilize the JWG meetings and other bilateral opportunities to meet with Mexico and consider measures to address the fishery in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, as appropriate.**

North Pacific albacore tuna

As of Nov 13, 2025, 359 vessels landed 8,912mt of North Pacific albacore tuna (NPA) which represents one of the most successful years since 2000 on a per-vessel basis.

With the federal government re-opened, the HMSAS looks forward to resuming discussions with NMFS to prepare for the 2026 NPA negotiations. The HMSAS appreciates the agency's commitment to hold a stakeholder workshop in early 2026 to inform outstanding issues related to the long-term harvest strategy, notably the conversion of effort to management measures and the adoption of exceptional circumstances. In planning the workshop, NMFS should coordinate with NPA industry organizations and other fishery stakeholders.

The HMSAS recommends that NMFS hold the NPA workshop in February to maximize participation by the fleet and avoid overlapping with the Dungeness crab fishery.

South Pacific albacore tuna

South Pacific albacore tuna (SPA) will be a focal point for discussions at the WCPFC annual meeting in December. Nations will consider proposals to adopt a harvest strategy and the associated implementation of the harvest strategy in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean region.

A portion of the West Coast troll fleet operates in the South Pacific region and targets SPA seasonally. While fewer U.S. vessels have utilized these fishing grounds in recent years, they are still an important seasonal fishing opportunity. SPA is still a relatively healthy stock but increasing pressure from longline fleets has increased uncertainty and the risk of losing market access and recognition. The fishery would benefit from adoption of a precautionary harvest strategy and associated implementation measures that protects U.S. interests, including more coordinated management through the new SPA Joint Working Group.

The HMSAS recommends that the U.S. delegation to WCPFC:

- **Prioritize adoption of the proposed harvest strategy (WCPFC22-2025-DP-02a) to ensure the sustainability of the stock and maintain market interest in SPA fisheries.**
- **Work with other delegations to improve the implementation proposal (WCPFC22-2025-DP02b (Oct. 31, 2025)), including:**
 - **Maintain all fisheries in the measure and preserve the ability of the U.S. troll fleet to access this fishery seasonally. Maintain access at levels commensurate with historic levels (baseline years 2000 – 2004 or 2020 - 2022).**
 - **Recommend restrictions to limit the transferability provision to a reasonable level (below 50% of its catch allocation).**
 - **Measures should take into account the disparate impact on the stock from different gear types.**
 - **Support the Area of Implementation as defined in proposal (all fishing activities south of 10 degrees South).**
 - **Ensure that observer coverage requirements are commensurate with anticipated levels of bycatch as confirmed by the data provision requirements included in the proposal.**
- **Encourage continued engagement through the new SPA JWG where possible to improve the likelihood of achieving comparable measures between the WCPFC and IATTC.**