



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES
Pacific Islands Regional Office
1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg 176
Honolulu, Hawaii 96818
(808) 725-5000 • Fax: (808) 725-5001

Agenda Item H.4
Attachment 2
September 2018

July 10, 2018

Kitty Simonds, Executive Director
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council
1164 Bishop Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Ms. Simonds:

Thank you for the letter, dated June 21, 2018, regarding the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's request that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) support a workshop to evaluate differences in bigeye tuna growth models used in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). The proposed workshop would compare techniques used by labs in the western and central Pacific Ocean and eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) for reading bigeye otoliths.

We understand that IATTC scientific staff intends to send samples of EPO bigeye tuna otoliths for processing by the lab that Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) uses for reading otoliths. IATTC staff has produced age estimates from "sister" otoliths, and the intent of this exercise will be to compare the daily age estimates derived by the IATTC with those derived by the lab used by CSIRO. When the results from the lab used by CSIRO are available, the IATTC and the Pacific Community/CSIRO will evaluate the necessity of a workshop.

We will follow the progress of this initiative and support it as appropriate. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact Valerie Post in the Pacific Islands Regional Office's International Fisheries Division at Valerie.post@noaa.gov or 808-725-5000.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Tosatto
Regional Administrator

cc: Chris Oliver, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS
Barry Thom, Regional Administrator, West Coast Region, NMFS
Chuck Tracy, Executive Director, Pacific Fishery Management Council





**Western
Pacific
Regional
Fishery
Management
Council**



June 21, 2018

Mr. Michael D. Tosatto
Regional Administrator
Pacific Islands Regional Office
NOAA Inouye Regional Center
1845 Wasp Boulevard, Building 176
Honolulu, HI 96818

Mr. Barry Thom
Regional Administrator
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
1201 Northeast Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
Portland, OR 97232

Dear Mike and Barry:

At its 173rd meeting held June 11-13, 2018, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council (Council) heard presentations on bigeye stock status in the WCPO and EPO and issues related to bigeye growth estimates used in associated stock assessments. From these presentations the Council is aware that different methods are being used to evaluate bigeye growth and that the results of such studies have a major impact on stock status. With respect to this issue, the Council, at its 173rd meeting, requested that NMFS support WCPFC and IATTC initiatives to convene a workshop to compare techniques and age estimates between otolith reading labs in the WCPO and EPO for the purposes of evaluating aging techniques and differences in growth models across the Pacific.

Please respond with information on how this issue is being addressed within the WCPFC and IATTC and steps NMFS is taking to support such initiatives.

Sincerely,

Kitty M. Simonds
Executive Director

Cc: Chris Oliver