

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE NORTH
PACIFIC ALBACORE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY EVALUATION WORKSHOP,
MARCH 5 TO 7, YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

As a review for the new Council members, in 2015 the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species (ISC's) Albacore Working Group was tasked with developing a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for North Pacific albacore (NP albacore). The results are designed to help inform the ongoing development of a precautionary management framework for NP albacore. Since 2015 there have been three international workshops along with the annual Northern Committee (NC) and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Committee (IATTC) meetings where this NP albacore MSE model has been developed to this point. The NP albacore MSE model will be a tool to help managers decide on what is the best long-term way to internationally manage NP albacore. The Operating Model assumes that the depletion of Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) by the harvesters is constant from year to year based on the assessments by the ISC's Albacore Working Group from 1999 to 2015. Reality is that the depletion is not constant, but for the model, the computer uses a constant number such as $F/50$. (This is the vertical axis of the Kobe plot.) This is approximately equivalent to a harvest rate of 50 percent. For example, if $F/50$ is the target level, then the model will assume 50 percent of the SSB is removed every year based on the SSB calculated by the Albacore Working Group. (Shown as $F/50$ on the Kobe chart.) Currently, hindcasting shows that fisheries have, over the last 20 years, historically depleted the SSB by an average of 51 percent. The current MSE Model effort is to evaluate the various levels of F (depletion by fisheries of SSB) with different variables per model run. Some of the variables in the runs include different values of SSB threshold. (The concept of SSB threshold is a point along the horizontal axis of the Kobe plot where the managers should institute measures constraining fisheries.) Managers will then choose, based on the results of the various computer runs, which result would be best to manage the long-term sustainability of the NP albacore stock. After the long-term NP albacore MSE is picked, a point on the Kobe chart is defined by the assessments by the scientists from the ISC and/or IATTC. That point on the Kobe chart will tell the managers if curtailment management measures are needed and will give guidance to the managers on how to impose the management measures. If/when management becomes necessary, industry believes US harvest would best be managed using effort controls such as fishing days or number of vessels. The Workshop managers are guessing that because the recent revised MSE model runs may not be done by the end of 2019, the IATTC and the WCPFC Northern Committee (NC) will decide this summer not to take further action until the revised model runs are completed.

As indicated above, NP albacore appears to be in a sustainable, healthy condition. The HMSAS recommends that the Council advise the US managers to not recommend Target Reference Points to the IATTC or the NC until after the scientists complete running the revised MSE Operating Models, which will likely be in early 2020. Also, it has come to our attention that the three-year assessment is to be completed in 2020 on NP Albacore by the ISC. The HMSAS recommends that the NP Albacore assessment takes priority over completion of the MSE model in terms of time requirements. Lastly, the HMSAS appreciates that the Council tasked the HMSMT to review the quantifiers on the historic effort by the US and foreign fleets. The material submitted under

[Agenda Item J.2, Attachment 2](#) is well done and going to be a valuable resource as we go forward in deciding how best to manage the US fleet in the future.

The HMSAS appreciates the Council sending an industry representative to the workshop. There were considerable exchanges between the managers, industry, and scientists that helped explain to each interest group a very complicated approach to managing NP Albacore for the benefit of the resource.

PFMC
03/10/19