

YELLOWFIN TUNA OVERFISHING RESPONSE

On November 2, 2018, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) notified the Council that the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) stock of yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) is not overfished but is subject to overfishing, and the Council must make recommendations within one year of that date to address the status of the stock pursuant to section 304(i) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (the notification is reproduced as Attachment 1). Section 304(i) states that if NMFS determines that a stock is overfished or approaching an overfished condition “due to excessive international fishing pressure, and for which there are no management measures to end international overfishing under an international agreement to which the United States is a party,” the Council must within one year:

- (A) develop recommendations for domestic regulations to address the relative impact of fishing vessels of the United States on the stock and, if developed by a Council, the Council shall submit such recommendations to the Secretary; and
- (B) develop and submit recommendations to the Secretary of State, and to the Congress, for international actions that will end overfishing in the fishery and rebuild the affected stocks, taking into account the relative impact of vessels of other nations and vessels of the United States on the relevant stock.

In November 2018 NMFS noted that although the stock of yellowfin tuna in the EPO is subject to overfishing, recent fishing mortality was estimated to be only slightly higher than F_{MSY} (i.e., $F_{2014-2016} / F_{MSY} = 1.01$). Furthermore, biomass in recent years was estimated to be more than double the minimum stock size threshold and greater than B_{MSY} . Therefore, the stock is unlikely to be “approaching an overfished condition.” Nonetheless, regulations at 600.310(j)(1) require NMFS to notify the Council if overfishing is occurring.

In 2019 an update assessment for EPO yellowfin tuna was conducted by Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) scientific staff and presented for review at the May 13-17, 2019 IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee meeting (Attachment 2 and Attachment 3). NMFS will determine whether this update assessment represents the best scientific information available to evaluate stock status, and if so, whether a change in the stock status determination is warranted. If NMFS concludes that that no change in status is warranted, the Council would need to finalize and submit its recommendations per MSA section 304(i) by November 2, 2019.

National Marine Fisheries Report 1 includes additional background and recommendations.

Council Action:

Review Status and Develop a Pacific Council Position on an Overfishing Response for Yellowfin Tuna for Public Review, as Appropriate.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.3, Attachment 1: November 2, 2018, Letter to Mr. Phil Anderson from Mr. Barry Thom Notifying Council on EPO Yellowfin Tuna Overfishing.
2. Agenda Item J.3, Attachment 2: Status Of Yellowfin Tuna In The Eastern Pacific Ocean In 2018 And Outlook For The Future, Document SAC-10-07.

3. Agenda Item J.3, Attachment 3: Stock Status Indicators For Yellowfin Tuna In The Eastern Pacific Ocean, Document SAC-10-08.
4. Agenda Item J.3.a, NMFS Report 1.
5. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

J.3 Yellowfin Tuna Overfishing Response

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- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- b. Public Comment
- c. **Council Action:** Review Status and Develop a Pacific Council Position on an Overfishing Response for Yellowfin Tuna for Public Review, as Appropriate

PFMC

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