

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES MANAGEMENT

There are two international management topics the Council may wish to provide recommendations on: the status of negotiations on a fishing regime for 2013 and beyond pursuant to the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty and the Ninth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) occurring December 2-6, 2012. Information on these topics is provided below. In addition, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) has scheduled a special meeting on October 24, termed an extraordinary meeting in IATTC parlance. This meeting was called to discuss issues related to the overlap between the IATTC and WCPFC Convention Areas. Although the currently available agenda reflects requests from Mexico and others to expand the agenda, the European Union and the United States, among others, objected and the meeting is likely to be confined to the original topic. Attachment 1 is the agenda as shown on the IATTC website on October 15 along with the caveat that the agenda is still under discussion.

U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty

The fishing regime, described in Annex C of the [U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty](#) was not renewed for 2012. The regime governs reciprocal access to each country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) by albacore vessels from the other country, so Canadian vessels were unable to fish in U.S. waters and vice versa. At its June meeting the Council urged "the Department of State (DOS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) do what is necessary to enable negotiations to move forward expeditiously, and reach a successful conclusion such that a replacement regime is in place for the 2013 fishing season." This included a call for the prompt exchange of the key information relevant to the issues frustrating agreement on a new fishing regime.

The lack of a fishing regime in 2012 had several effects. Over the last decade Canadian vessels have expended increasing effort in the U.S. zone, which they were unable to do in 2012. U.S. harvesters were primarily affected because U.S. vessels were denied port privileges in Canadian ports. This prevented them from delivering fish to Canadian processors or picking up foreign crew. Also, U.S. vessels could not fish in the Canadian zone, although historically most U.S. vessels have not depended on fishing in Canadian waters. U.S. processors also did not benefit from landings from Canadian vessels, although analysis of 2012 landings could show adequate substitution by landings from U.S. vessels.

The US-Canada Albacore Treaty Data Working Group held a meeting on August 30 and the Economic Working Group met September 10. As of this writing a bilateral U.S.-Canada meeting has not been scheduled to discuss a replacement fishing regime for 2013.

Ninth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

There are several issues likely to arise at the Commission meeting that the Council may want to comment on. They are briefly reviewed below.

Conservation measure for yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack tunas in the Western Pacific. The Commission adopted a 3-year conservation measure for these stocks in 2008. Although a replacement measure was to be considered at the 2011 meeting, the meeting was delayed at the last moment until March 2012 and there was apparently insufficient international appetite for a comprehensive revamping of the measure. Instead, [CMM 2011-01](#) effectively rolls over the existing conservation measure for 2012 with the expectation that a new measure will be developed at the Ninth Commission meeting. Attachment 2 is a report to the Scientific Committee prepared by the South Pacific Commission Oceanic Fisheries Program on the effectiveness of CMM 2008-01. Attachment 3 is a proposed replacement CMM prepared by the WCPFC Chair and Vice-Chair and presented at the Eighth Technical and Compliance Committee meeting.

North Pacific striped marlin. [CMM 2010-01](#) implemented a phased reduction in North Pacific striped marlin such that by January 1, 2013, catch is to be 80% of the 2000-2003 level. Based on the latest North Pacific striped marlin stock assessment completed by the Billfish Working Group, the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific (ISC) found that the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. Attachment 4 excerpts the conservation advice for North Pacific striped marlin from the [ISC12 Plenary Report](#). The ISC noted that “Fishing at the average 2001-2003 fishing mortality rate would lead to a spawning biomass decrease of 2% under recent recruitment to an increase of 6% under the stock-recruitment curve assumption by 2017.” The ISC also provided projections of 2017 spawning biomass under various harvest scenarios for consideration by fishery managers. Eighty percent of 2000-2003 average catch works out to approximately 3,600 mt based on Table 14-4 in the ISC Plenary Report (providing estimates of total annual landings). The Northern Committee “noted that Commission members should take into account the valuable information contained in the ISC12 report when considering possible catch limits for NP striped marlin and options for improving the existing measure” ([NC8 Summary Report](#)).

Pacific bluefin tuna. Although the ISC Pacific Bluefin Working Group (PBFWG) had planned to complete a new stock assessment by ISC12 it was unable to do so due to disagreements within the WG over modeling issues. The PBFWG is scheduled to meet November 10-17 to complete the assessment and an ISC Plenary meeting (emergency) is scheduled for December 17-21 to consider the results. ISC12 repeated its previous advice that “it is important that the level of F is decreased below the 2002-2004 levels, particularly on juvenile age classes.” The Northern Committee proposed a conservation measure for 2013 that essentially rolls over the existing measure ([CMM 2010-04](#)) with the same exemptions for artisanal fisheries (relevant to small-scale vessels in Japan) and Korean fisheries (see Attachment 5). The proposal adds a provision for countries to monitor and report to the Commission international trade in products derived from Pacific bluefin tuna. This is most relevant to imports by Japan from Korea and Mexico.

The Permanent Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the WCPFC will meet October 25-26. The Council Executive Director or his designee attends as an ex-officio member. Supplemental information on the results of this meeting will be provided to the Council.

Council Action:

Consider International Management Recommendations Including the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty and Recommendations to the U.S. Delegation to the Ninth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item J.1.a, Attachment 1: Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission 84th Meeting (Extraordinary), La Jolla, California (USA) 24 – 25 October 2012; Provisional Agenda
2. Agenda Item J.1.a, Attachment 2: Review of the Implementation and Effectiveness of CMM 2008-01, WCPFC-SC8-2012/ SC8-WCPFC8-01
3. Agenda Item J.1.a, Attachment 3: Conservation and Management Measure for Bigeye, Yellowfin and Skipjack Tuna in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean; Paper prepared by the WCPFC Chair and WCPFC Vice-Chair
4. Agenda Item J.1.a, Attachment 4: Excerpt from Report of the Twelfth Meeting Of The International Scientific Committee For Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean Plenary Session 18-23 July 2012, Sapporo, Hokkaido Japan
5. Agenda Item J.1.a, Attachment 5: Draft Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (Northern Committee Eighth Regular Session, September 3-6, 2012)
6. Agenda Item J.1.c, Public Comment: Letter from the American Albacore Fishing Association

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kit Dahl
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Consider International Management Recommendations Including the U.S.-Canada Albacore Treaty and Recommendations to the U.S. Delegation to the Ninth Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

PFMC
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