

**JOINT IATTC AND WCPFC-NC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE  
MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA  
SEVENTH SESSION (JWG-07)**

ELECTRONIC MEETING  
09:00-13:00, Japan Standard Time  
12-14 July 2022

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**Statement to the Seventh Joint IATTC-NC Working Group Meeting on PBF Management**

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**IATTC-NC-JWG07-2022/OP-01**

**The Ocean Foundation**



**Statement to the Seventh Joint IATTC-NC Working Group Meeting on PBF Management  
July 12-14, online**

The Ocean Foundation welcomes the opportunity to participate as an observer to the Seventh Joint IATTC-NC Meeting on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management (JWG-07). We would like to thank the conveners for their efforts to schedule this virtual meeting and acknowledge the 2022 assessment's encouraging news about potential stock growth. Developing a long-term, fully specified harvest strategy that is tested by Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) is required by WCPFC CMM 2014-06, was committed to by the NC in 2017, and should be a top priority for the JWG. A harvest strategy can account for uncertainties, including unreported catch and life history characteristics, such as recruitment, while ensuring Pacific bluefin tuna is recovered to and maintained at a desirable level. Specifically, we urge members to:

**Recommend a list of operational management objectives and performance indicators.** We welcome the proposal by the United States ([DP-12](#)) to provide measurable management objectives and performance indicators to enable the ISC to undertake the technical work in developing the MSE. In recommending use of the list, the JWG should make two changes. First, it should include a status objective to maintain the stock at or above a biomass-based target reference point (TRP). Pending selection of a long-term TRP, the second rebuilding target ( $20\%SSB_{F=0}$ ) should be used. The other tuna RFMOs are developing or have harvest strategies in place that all use biomass-based TRPs, and biomass is referenced by the objectives in the IATTC and WCPFC conventions. Particularly for a stock that has been highly depleted, ensuring the stock is maintained around a desirable level of biomass should be a high priority. Second, the stability objective should constrain catch *increases* as well as decreases, because both can adversely impact fishing industries and markets. In addition, a large increase in allowable catch in one year can result in a cascading effect, requiring a large decrease soon after.

**Take steps to accelerate work to develop the MSE.** The IATTC and NC requested the ISC to finalize development of an MSE by 2024. To achieve this timeline, the JWG should agree on a workplan that sets out clear steps with associated deadlines, noting the gaps in any resources that may be required to accomplish each task. With the stock projected to potentially achieve the second rebuilding target in 2023, it is more critical than ever to develop the MSE. Agreement on the management objectives and performance indicators at JWG-07 will give the ISC the information they need to get started. Another assessment is unlikely to reveal novel information; the MSE should be the priority. The up-front investment in a fully-tested harvest strategy will pay dividends in the long-term, ensuring a healthy and profitable Pacific bluefin fishery in the years to come.