



**The Ocean Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts  
Statement to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission  
19<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Northern Committee  
July 6-7, 2023, Fukuoka, Japan**

The Ocean Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts welcome the opportunity to participate as observers at the 19<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Northern Committee of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (NC19). We appreciate the work of the Chair, Members and Secretariat to convene the first hybrid Northern Committee meeting since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and look forward to seeing some of our colleagues in person. There are a number of substantial conservation and management opportunities on this meeting's agenda, and as such, we urge NC19 to:

**North Pacific Albacore**

**Recommend adoption of a fully specified harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore.** The measure recommended by NC18 and adopted by WCPFC last year ([Harvest Strategy 2022-01](#)) establishes nearly all the key elements of a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore. It specifies management objectives, target and limit reference points, acceptable levels of risk, and a monitoring strategy. The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) adopted a nearly identical measure in 2022 ([Resolution C-22-04](#)). Both WCPFC and IATTC measures call for adoption of a harvest control rule (HCR) in 2023 to finalize the harvest strategy.

[Proposal NC19-DP-02](#) includes a formulaic HCR consistent with the harvest strategy specifications agreed last year. We strongly urge that NC19 recommends the measure be adopted by WCPFC20 with its highest endorsement. A functionally equal measure should also be adopted at the 101<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the IATTC, which will take place in August. Together, the two resulting measures will create the first multi-organization harvest strategy in the world, as well as the first Pacific-wide harvest strategy, securing the sustainability and profitability of the North Pacific albacore fishery for the long-term.

**North Pacific Swordfish**

We commend the WCPFC for adopting its first North Pacific swordfish measure last year, which caps fishing effort at 2008-2010 levels ([CMM 2022-02](#)). This is a good first step, but NC19 should expand its application to the full range (i.e., north of 0°N) and outline a plan to conduct a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the stock, including by specifying candidate reference points and HCRs, consistent with the NC *Work Programme*. The NC Chair's working paper, [NC19-WP-04](#), should be updated accordingly.

**Pacific Bluefin Tuna**

We submitted a separate statement to the 8<sup>th</sup> Joint IATTC-NC Working Group Meeting on PBF Management, so briefly reiterate those priorities here. JWG08 and NC19 should adopt the proposed

reduced set of management objectives, performance indicators, and HCRs for testing in the Pacific bluefin MSE and continue to advance development of the electronic Pacific Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation (ePBCD) system. Importantly, the ePBCD can serve as a basis for creating catch documentation schemes for other valuable NC stocks, including swordfish.