

**JOINT IATTC AND WCPFC-NC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA
EIGHTH SESSION (JWG-08)**

Fukuoka, Japan
3 – 5 July 2023

**Korea's comments on the Japanese Paper:
"Need for timely adjustment of catch limits of Pacific Bluefin Tuna (JWG08-DP-14)"**

IATTC-NC-JWG08-2023/DP-18

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Korea's comments on the Japanese Paper "Need for timely adjustment of catch limits of Pacific Bluefin Tuna"

Korea shares most of the views expressed in this paper and would like to thank Japan for presenting the relevant information and analysis in such a very clear and logical way. Among others, we feel great sympathy for the Japanese set net fishermen as we have the same problem.

While we believe that there will be more in-depth discussions on the catch limits next year based on the new stock assessment and taking into account of the analyses and views contained in this paper, we would like to provide our initial comments as follows :

- The rapid increase in Pacific Bluefin Tuna biomass suggests that the stock is recovering faster than expected, and this should be taken into account when setting catch limits. Korea agrees that the current catch limits are too conservative and do not reflect the current state of the stock.
- Korea is experiencing the similar situation to Japan, where bigger and a larger number of PBF tuna are migrating into the Korean sea areas, especially to its territorial waters.
- Although being the smallest harvester in the WCPFC Area with great margins of difference from large catchers, Korea has been implementing measures in earnest to ensure the sustainable management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna, such as limiting the numbers of vessels and implementing catch limits.
- At the outset, Korea's catch limits were set solely based on the historical catch which came from the period when things have significantly different, when the catches were mostly bycatch—this means Korea did not even contribute to the near collapse of the PBF resources in the first place.
- Korea could have argued for an exemption as a bycatching nation, but joined the management scheme and agreed to cut its already significantly small catch into half to contribute to the rebuilding of the stocks.
- Korea could have argued for an increase to level the playing field, but withheld its

interest to put the rebuilding and conservation needs first.

- However, now that the stocks are showing evident signs of recovery, Korea would like to take this opportunity to make its case.
- In recent years, Korea has had a lot of issues with controlling the significant inflow of large PBF into set nets of subsistence fishers, which we strongly believe calls for a reasonable increase of Korea's catch limits as the current level has inherent limitations to effective management and data collection.
- As a coastal state, Korea has a legitimate interest in the management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna, and it is important to ensure that the rights of coastal states are respected in the management of shared fish stocks, particularly taking into account the changes in the migratory patterns of the fish. As far as the management of Pacific Bluefin tuna is concerned, we are under the impression that the historical and current CMM on PBF have not been so successful in keeping the right balance between the rights of coastal states and their duties to cooperate internationally to conserve the fish stock. Having a nearly zero initial catch limit for large Pacific Bluefin tuna just because there is no historical catch record does not make any sense when considering the rights of coastal states.

Having said so, we look forward to having more substantial discussions on catch limit next year in light of this paper from Japan and the result of next stock assessment.