

**JOINT IATTC AND WCPFC-NC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA
NINTH SESSION (JWG-09)**

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Report on CMM 2023-02 (Pacific bluefin tuna)

IATTC-NC-JWG09-2024/DP-06 (Rev.02)

Republic of Korea

Implementation Report on the Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (CMM 2021-02)

June 25, 2024

Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea

Pursuant to paragraph 14 of the Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (CMM 2021-02), the Republic of Korea hereby reports on its implementation of CMM 2021-02 as follows:

A. Overview

In 2023, Korea’s total available catch limit for Pacific Bluefin tuna (hereinafter referred to as “PBF”) was 748 tons. Korea’s annual catch limit for PBF less than 30kg was set at 718 tons—50% of its 2002-2004 annual average (1,435 tons) while that for PBF 30kg or larger was set at 30 ton.

The catch proportion of set net fishery has been increasing in recent years and the 2022 catch was the record high. In 2023, the catch of set net fishery was similar to that of 2022. Also, the catch of large PBF in 2023 accounted for 67% of the total catch. Our purse seine fishing vessels operated during February to March in the eastern part of Jeju island, and the PBF catch in set net fishery took place mostly from June to September along the East coast of Korean peninsula. As for the PBF size frequency, large PBF (30kg or larger) has increased since 2016.

B. Further Details of implementation

Paragraph 2. CCMs shall take measures necessary to ensure that total fishing effort by their vessel fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna in the area north of the 20° N shall stay below the 2002–2004 annual average levels.

In 2023, nineteen (19) large-scale purse seiners caught PBF so the number of vessels was below the level of 2002-2004 annual average (30 vessels).

< The Number of Vessels Caught PBF from 2002 to 2004 >

Year	No. of Vessels
2002	32
2003	29
2004	29

Paragraph 3. Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei shall, respectively, take measures necessary to ensure that its catches of Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30 kg and Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger shall not exceed the annual catch limits in the tables below. The basis for the limits is as follows; annual catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30 kg are 50% of the 2002-2004 average annual levels and annual catch limits for Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger are 115% of the 2002-2004 average annual levels or 30 metric tons for a CCM who does not have an initial catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger before 2022.

In accordance with the *Ministerial Directive on the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of Korea* which governs the national implementation of CMM 2021-02, Korea's 2023 catch limit for PBF less than 30kg was set at 718 tons—50% of its 2002-2004 annual average (1,435 tons) while that for PBF 30kg or larger was set at 30 ton. The Directive requires that any PBF catches/releases/discards must be reported to the National Institute of Fisheries Science (NIFS) within 24 hours of the catch. Since 2005, the government has been cross-checking the reported PBF catches by Korean purse seiners and set net fishermen with the sales log sheets maintained at designated consignment markets for the purpose of verification.

Major requirements of the Ministerial Directive also include:

- The efforts for PBF and the catches of juvenile PBF shall stay below the level prescribed by the relevant conservation and management measures of the WCPFC;
- Catches of PBF (e.g. target/non-target, quantities) shall be reported to the government, and be sold only at a designated consignment market; and
- When total PBF catches are deemed to approach or exceed its annual catch limit, the government shall take necessary measures to prevent the total catches from exceeding the catch limit (e.g. prohibition of PBF catches and closure of designated consignment market for PBF).

The aforementioned Directive requires that any catches of PBF 30kg or larger must be reported along with the record of corresponding fishing activities to NIFS within 24 hours of the catch. In addition, all individuals of PBF caught are required to be sold only at designated consignment markets for the purpose of verification and prevention of any illegal trade.

If and when there is a risk of breaching the catch limit stipulated in the CMM, the government takes measures including the prohibition of fishing and landing of PBF, the closure of designated consignment markets for PBF and the suspension of issuing PBF statistical documents.

Paragraph 5. Any overage or underage of the catch limit shall be deducted from or may be added to the catch limit for the following year. The maximum underage that a CCM may carry over in any given year shall not exceed 5% of its annual initial catch limit.

In 2023, 164.07 tons of catch limit for small PBF was not utilized and 122.06 tons was carried forward to 2024 in accordance with the footnote 1 of the CMM.

Paragraph 8. CCMs shall report to the Executive Director by 31 July each year their fishing effort and <30 kg and >=30 kg catch levels, by fishery, for the previous 3 year, accounting for all catches, including discards. CCMs shall report their annual catch limits and their annual catches of PBF, with adequate computation details, to present their implementation for paragraph 5 and 6, if the measures and arrangements in the said paragraphs and relevant footnotes applied. The Executive Director will compile this information each year into an appropriate format for the use of the Northern Committee.

< PBF catches (t) in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 by size and fishery >

Year	smaller than 30kg				30kg or larger			
	Purse Seiner	set net	others	subtotal	Purse Seiner	set net	others	subtotal
2020	154.1	34.5	2.2	190.8	412.7	0.8	0.4	413.9
2021	365.6	83.1	3.1	451.8	56.6	1.1	0.0	57.7
2022	144.7	214.7	6.4	365.8	509.0	6.7	0.0	515.7
2023	124.8	201.3	5.2	331.3	323.1	14.0	0.0	337.1

< Computation details for 2023 >

Initial catch limit (tons)	Large fish($\geq 30\text{Kg}$)	Small fish(<Kg) (a)	Total
	30	718	748
Unused catch limit carried forward from the previous year	Large fish	Small fish	Total
	0	0	0
Total available catch limit	Large fish (b)	Small fish (c)	Total
	30	718	748
Catch	Large fish (d)	Small fish (e)	Total
	337.1	331.3	668.4

Application of the conversion factor and Utilization of catch limit	
1) Maximum amount of small fish catch limit that can be utilized to catch large fish applying the conversion factor : (a) x 0.25	179.5
2) Amount of large fish that corresponds to 1) : 1) ÷ 0.68	263.97
3) Amount of large fish caught utilizing small fish catch limit, without applying the conversion factor : (d) - 2) - (b)	43.13
4) Total amount of small fish catch limit utilized : (e) + 1) + 3)	553.93
5) Total amount of large fish catch limit utilized : (d) - 2) - 3)	30
6) Catch limit not utilized : (c) - 4)	164.07
7) Amount of catch limit carried forward to 2024 (17% of the initial catch limit)	122.06

Paragraph 10. CCMs, in particular those catching juvenile Pacific bluefin tuna, shall take measures to monitor and obtain prompt results of recruitment of juveniles each year.

Since 2013, NIFS has been collecting eggs and larvae of fisheries resources which occur, spawn, and/or migrate through the Korean EEZ to study their biological characteristics. Due to the recent increase in the migration of large PBF into the Korean EEZ, a survey of PBF eggs and larvae has been conducted by a survey vessel of NIFS, covering the waters from the southern coast of Jeju Island to the waters in the Eastern side of Korean peninsula. The eggs and larvae of PBF in 2021 and 2022 were collected in the Eastern side of Korean peninsula. In 2023, the widespread presence of the PBF eggs and larvae was confirmed from the southern waters of Jeju, through the southern waters of the Eastern side of Korean peninsula. PBF eggs collected in the southern waters of Jeju were found to be distributed between the surface and 40 meters of depth.

Paragraph 11. Consistent with their rights and obligations under international law, and in accordance with domestic laws and regulations, CCMs shall, to the extent possible, take measures necessary to prevent commercial transaction of Pacific bluefin tuna and its products that undermine the effectiveness of this CMM, especially measures prescribed in the paragraph 3 above. CCMs shall cooperate for this purpose.

Korea's Ministerial Directive on the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna requires that all PBF caught by Korean vessels be sold only at designated consignment fish markets in order to prevent any commercial transaction of PBF and its products that could undermine the effectiveness of the CMM. The international trade of PBF is also being monitored through statistical documents accompanied by PBF exported to foreign markets, mostly the Japanese market.

Also, the government takes measures including the prohibition of fishing and landing of PBF and the closure of designated consignment markets for PBF and statistical documents, if and when there is a risk of seriously undermining the effectiveness of the CMM for PBF (e.g. overages of PBF juvenile catch limits).

In 2023, there was no PBF import and total 406.2 tons of PBF (314.5 tons of fresh tuna and 91.7 tons of frozen tuna) were exported to Japan.

13. CCMs shall also take measures necessary to strengthen monitoring and data collecting system for Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries and farming in order to improve the data quality and timeliness of all the data reporting;

The government requires designated consignment market representatives and port-samplers to report the records of PBF sales and biological data (e.g. length, weight) to the government, respectively. Since 2015, all fishers have been required to report to the government any catches of PBF within 24 hours of the catch. The NIFS takes some of PBF sold at designated consignment markets as a sample to collect and analyze biological data (e.g. weight, length, stomach contents and otolith, etc.)

16. To enhance effectiveness of this measure, CCMs are encouraged to communicate with and, if appropriate, work with the concerned IATTC contracting parties bilaterally.

Korea has engaged in close consultations and cooperation with the IATTC Contracting Parties through relevant meetings of WCPFC and IATTC as well as bilateral meetings, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the CMM for PBF.