



## **20<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Northern Committee, Ninth Joint IATTC-NC Working Group Meeting on PBF Management:**

### **Kushiro, Japan - July 10 - 16, 2024**

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) would like to thank the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) for the opportunity to attend the 20th Regular Session of the Northern Committee and Ninth Joint IATTC-NC Working Group Meeting on PBF Management as an observer and to address the critically important role that it plays in the proper management of the Pacific Ocean fisheries.

Technical reports of all scientific and management bodies responsible for management of the Pacific Bluefin tuna stock, including the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) and the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), indicate that the Pacific Bluefin tuna stock recovered and spawning stock biomass (SSB) was 10 times higher than the historical low.

The updated stock assessment by the ISC in 2024 confirmed that

- ① Stock has recovered to 144,000 ton (23.2%  $SSB_0$ ) and achieved at the second rebuilding target (20%  $SSB_0$ ) in 2021 earlier than the target year.
- ② Stock is not overfished relative to the biomass-based limit reference points adopted for other species in WCPFC (20%  $SSB_0$ )
- ③ Stock is not subject to overfishing relative to some of F-based reference points proposed for tuna species, including SPR 20%.

Although Pacific Bluefin tuna's stock recovered to rebuilding target, WWF maintains deep concerns regarding the health of the Pacific Bluefin tuna stock and remains committed to restoring and rebuilding this ecologically, sociologically, and economically important fishery resource. Therefore, WWF recommends the WCPFC to take a precautionary approach for keeping this stock.

WWF recommends that the WCPFC and IATTC:

- Establishing Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) with a precautionary Limit and Target Reference Point for Pacific Bluefin tuna by 2025;
- Without reconfirmation that each member country will adopt the MSE in 2025, there should be no increase in catch quotas; any increase from the current level of catches, must be underpinned by scientific advice, ensuring that the increasing trend of the stock abundance is preserved, and
- Developing Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) for the thorough monitoring of Pacific Bluefin tuna to ensure proper stock assessment and reduce IUU fishery risk by 2025.



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