



21st Regular Session of the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Northern Committee, Tenth Joint IATTC-NC Working Group Meeting on PBF Management:

Toyama, Japan – July 9 – 15, 2025

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 21st Regular Session of the Northern Committee and Tenth Joint IATTC-NC Working Group Meeting on PBF Management as an observer and to address the critically important role that PBF management 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% SSB₀) and achieved at the second rebuilding target (20% SSB₀) 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% SSB₀)
- ③ Stock is not subject to overfishing relative to some of F-based reference points proposed for tuna species, including SPR 20%.

With the recovery of Pacific bluefin tuna stocks, in 2024, the WCPFC and IATTC decided to increase the catch quota (large fish +50%, small fish +10%) at a level maintained at the increasing stock trend. In addition, due to the expansion of the distribution range of Pacific bluefin tuna in the southern hemisphere, a new quota has been set for New Zealand and Australia. However, there is a possibility that the

expansion of Pacific bluefin tuna distribution will lead to new fishing opportunities for Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing vessels, and it may lead to unexpected overfishing. WWF remains deeply concerned that overfishing will occur exposing again the stock to the risk of collapse in the absence of robust management measures to address the impact of IUU fishery of Pacific bluefin tuna.

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;
- Developing detailed measures and work plans for monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) of Pacific bluefin tuna. In particular, establish standardized reporting procedures for bycatch and discards, and strengthen reporting and monitoring of caging at farms;
- Developing Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) by 2026 as a measure to improve the accuracy of stock assessments and reduce the risk of IUU fishing by strengthening monitoring of Pacific bluefin tuna., and
- Improving transparency in Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries by the phase in of 100% observer (human or electronic) on all industrial vessels targeting or catching Pacific bluefin tuna. Both IATTC and WCPFC have adopted minimum standards for electronic monitoring systems (EM), that offer a good alternative to human observers. increase



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