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**The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation Statement to WCPFC22**

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**WCPFC22-2025-OP11**

**18 November 2025**

**Submitted by The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation**

**The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation  
Statement to the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission  
December 1-5, 2025, Manila, Philippines**

The Pew Charitable Trusts and The Ocean Foundation welcome the opportunity to participate in the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) as observers. We urge members to hasten the adoption of new approaches that will provide greater resiliency and stability for the region's fisheries. As such, we urge members to make the following decisions:

***Adopt a management procedure (MP) for south Pacific albacore (SPA)***

The south Pacific albacore (SPA) management procedure (MP) has been one of the most analyzed in global tuna management. It has been evaluated for both effort and catch controls, against multiple target reference levels, across various geographical boundaries and with its performance assessed against differing reference years and fishing gears. **The time has come to now select the candidate MP that best meets managers' objectives and move the management of SPA from the traditional reactive approach to the science-based, proactive MP approach.** The Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) members have proposed an MP that has been tested through management strategy evaluation ([WCPFC-2025-DP02a](#)) and an implementing measure ([WCPFC-2025-DP02b](#)). We urge members to cooperate to resolve their differences among the options for the MP's geographic scope, target reference point, and harvest control rule and:

- Adopt an MP for SPA that minimizes the risk of the stock falling below the limit reference point and maintains the biomass around the interim target reference point with a high degree of certainty;
- Adopt a conservation and management measure to implement the outputs of the MP; and
- Adopt the terms of reference for a joint working group on SPA with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to open a path for pan-Pacific management of SPA.

***Adopt improvements to port State measures***

Effective port State measures minimize the risk of illegally caught fish entering international markets. Since WCPFC adopted CMM 2017-02, more countries around the globe have joined the FAO Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), including several WCPFC members. However, the WCPFC scheme remains voluntary, and several aspects are not aligned with the effective practices of the PSMA. Only a small proportion of members and cooperating non-members (10 of 34) have designated ports to opt into the measure. **WCPFC should build on the discussion of PSMs at the meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee and adopt a revised CMM that aligns with the PSMA.** Critical improvements should include provisions that:

- Require port designation and advance entry requests;
- Allow for authorization and denial of port entry; and

- Ensure effective national coordination and exchange of information to facilitate risk assessment in port.

Aligning the WCPFC measure with the already operational FFA regional electronic PSM framework or adopting the FAO's Global Information Exchange System to meet WCPFC's regional needs, including the requirements of small island developing States and participating territories, will ensure that illegally caught fish does not reach the market. We also urge members to create a fund to assist all remaining members to opt in to the current measure or implement a revised measure as soon as possible.

### ***Strengthen the independent monitoring of Commission's fisheries***

Following last year's adoption of a set of interim electronic monitoring (EM) standards, the Commission now has the opportunity to continue to refine and strengthen those standards, improve the reliability of data collection, and increase transparency. **Members should support the continued work of the ER and EM Working group and prioritize the development of an audit and assurance process for domestic EM programs**, which would help ensure that EM information is being consistently and accurately collected and submitted by members.

**We also urge members to increase the required level of independent monitoring coverage for longline fisheries.** Members should adopt the provision in the FFA's Pacific albacore MP proposal ([WCPFC-2025-DP02b](#)) that requires 30% independent monitoring of fishing activity, using a mix of human observers and EM. This requirement would help strengthen stock assessments, provide vital data on bycatch interactions, and set a new standard for the Commission's longline fisheries.

### ***Complete tasks remaining to improve the Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS)***

A robust CMS is essential to helping ensure Members are held accountable for meeting their obligations, identifying capacity needs, highlighting where measures need to be amended, and supporting sustainable fisheries. **The Commission should task the Technical and Compliance Committee with completing several pieces of work to enhance and improve the CMS**, including:

- Evaluating how the Commission data rules and procedures are currently applied to the Compliance Monitoring Review process, and recommending any changes to ensure effectiveness and transparency;
- Developing guidelines to allow effective and constructive observer participation in the CMS process; and
- Developing corrective actions to help guide responses to instances of non-compliance.

Finally, we remain seriously concerned by the decision to continue to exclude potential non-compliance reported by purse seine observers when examining compliance summaries and trends during the CMS. Differences in the independent monitoring of fishing activity should be resolved by raising levels in the longline fishery and improving the compliance process for all parties, instead of excluding vital data that was collected by human observers. **Members must**

**prioritize reaching agreement on a fair, representative, and transparent way to utilize all available data, including observer reports, within the CMS process.**

***Improve the monitoring and reporting of at-sea transshipment activities***

The gaps in the Commission's ability to monitor and verify at-sea transshipment activities must be closed. **The Commission should adopt a stronger measure on transshipment this year, bringing WCPFC up to the standard of the other tuna RFMOs.** The large number of transshipments occurring in the WCPFC area and lack of updated reporting requirements currently creates opportunities for laundering Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) catch. The stronger measure should include:

- Shortening the submission deadline for transshipment declarations;
- Requiring that IMO numbers be included on notification and declaration forms;
- Prohibiting vessels from acting as a receiving and offloading vessel on the same trip; and
- Requiring vessels to provide information on instances of non-fish supply and/or crew transfer activities.

Adopting a measure without these key elements would mean that seven years of negotiations would have failed to secure a meaningful outcome, leaving the WCPFC to continue to lag the rest of the world when it comes to managing transshipment activity.

***Advance management procedures for other stocks***

Commission members, industry, and non-governmental organizations agree that the development of management procedures is key to the future sustainability and profitability of the region's fish stocks. As such, WCPFC should:

- Ensure that an intersessional session of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC Northern Committee Working Group Meeting on the Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna is scheduled for early 2026, which is necessary to finalize negotiations on which candidate management procedure the Commission will adopt in 2026;
- Schedule a dialogue meeting in early 2026 for managers, scientists and stakeholders to discuss aspects of a management procedure for bigeye tuna, which is also necessary to ensure the Commission can adopt a proposal in 2026; and
- Adopt management objectives for yellowfin tuna, including a target reference point/threshold level, which will allow full integration of the multi-species framework to be tested for managing all four major tuna stocks.

***Require beneficial ownership data***

IUU fishing undermines WCPFC's goals of conserving tuna and tuna-like species and ensuring the long-term sustainability of fisheries through effective compliance of its conservation and management measures. Identifying not only the vessels which operate outside the rules, but also those that profit from their operations is a key tool to preventing IUU fishing. We therefore support the recommendations of observer paper [WCPFC22-2025-OP09](#) and urge the commission to act to implement them.