



The Pew Charitable Trusts
Statement to the 3rd Interseasonal Meeting of the Joint IATTC-NC Working Group
on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management
March 11-13, Newport Beach, California, USA

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes the opportunity to participate as an observer at the 3rd Interseasonal Meeting of the Joint IATTC-NC Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management. We appreciate the work of the co-chairs, Secretariats, and Members to convene this meeting and highlight the need for approaches to improve the resiliency of this stock. As such, we urge Members to:

Recommend adoption of a management procedure for Pacific bluefin tuna that prioritizes the safety of the stock and effectively responds to changes in stock status

Unfortunately, the discussion on options for a management procedure (MP) in July 2025 ended without consensus on a single recommended HCR. Now that the most recent stock assessment estimates that Pacific bluefin has achieved the second rebuilding target of 20 percent unfished spawning stock biomass ($20\%SSB_{F=0}$), **it's critical for members to adopt an MP this year that secures the stock's long-term sustainability.**

In recommending an MP for adoption, we urge Members to prioritize the following elements:

- **Include a defined LRP.** An agreed-to LRP, even if not used as a control point, is necessary to define the low stock level that should be avoided;
- **Include a harvest control rule (HCR) that is responsive to the status of the stock.** Inflexible constant TACs (such as those included in HCRs 5/13) are inherently risky, as they rely on high levels of recruitment to successfully rebuild the stock;
- **Ensure a low probability of being below 20% of unfished spawning stock biomass** to promote the safety of the stock; and
- Do not allow disagreements over the ratio of east-west catch to be an impediment to agreeing to an MP this year.

Several options would satisfy those criteria, including HCRs 2/10 and 4/12, and achieve the objectives agreed to by the JWG. After years of international cooperation and strict catch limits, Members should demonstrate their leadership in sustainable fisheries by agreeing on an approach that offers the best possible chance to maintain the gains that have been achieved.

Advance development of the catch documentation system

We support the ongoing discussions on the Pacific bluefin tuna catch documentation system, which will improve data collection for better quota management, compliance and traceability along the value chain, and reduce IUU fishing. We urge Members to resolve any outstanding issues to enable a CDS measure to be adopted at the IATTC and WCPFC later this year.