



SECOND BIGEYE TUNA MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP (BMW02)

1 – 2 October 2026

Honolulu, Hawaii (Hybrid)

WCPO BIGEYE TUNA MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE: KEY DECISIONS FOR ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

WCPFC-BMW02-2026-WP01

28 September 2026

SPC-OFP

1 Introduction

The development and agreement of the WCPO bigeye management procedure (BET MP) will require managers and scientists to make decisions on specific harvest strategy elements and issues. In this document we outline the key decisions and timelines that i) regional fishery managers and stakeholders and ii) scientists (through the Scientific Committee) will need to consider at a number of upcoming meetings.

The decision points outlined in this document represent one pathway for the adoption and implementation of the BET MP. Decision points may vary depending on the discussions of BMW02 and the special SC.

2 BET MP design and evaluation

Details of the various options currently under consideration for the design and implementation of the BET MP are provided in a number of accompanying documents submitted to BMW02. In this document we outline the sequence and timeline for outstanding decisions that will enable adoption of a BET MP at WCPFC23 and its implementation at WCPFC24.

Evaluation of candidate MPs is currently being conducted across the following MP design options:

- Areas and fleets of application
 - TLL including Hawaiian LL fishery
 - TLL excluding Hawaiian LL fishery
 - WCPO wide - all fisheries subject to the MP
 - WCPO wide - excluding SIDs, implementation through the TT-CMM
- Target reference point (TRP)
 - 0.94 x 2012-2015 average spawning biomass depletion
 - 0.94 x 2012-2015 average spawning biomass depletion, with a threshold of 60%
 - 0.94 x 2012-2015 average spawning biomass depletion, with a threshold of 70%
 - 1.06 x 2012-2015 average spawning biomass depletion

In addition, two HCR designs (formulations) have been considered with evaluation for one formulation conducted across the full range of scenarios and the other across a subset of scenarios (see WCPFC-BMW02-WP05).

3 Considerations and outcomes of BMW01 and SC22

Discussions at BMW01 identified preferred options for a number of decision points, and accommodation has been made for further requests received during SC22. Whilst some of these points have not yet been formally agreed, testing has proceeded under the expectation that the following conditions will apply

- the duration of the management period will be 3 years, utilising a 2-year data lag.
- performance indicators will include:
 - Stock status in the WCPFC-CA (SB/SBF=0)
 - Proximity to the TRP.
 - Probability of SB/SBF=0 being above the LRP.
 - Expected BET catches for MP managed fisheries (separately for PS and LL).
 - Expected vulnerable biomass for MP managed fisheries.
 - Catch and effort variability (separately for PS and LL).
 - MSY, and F relative to MSY.
- output controls of the MP will be purse seine FAD open period and longline catch, although discussions have noted that where implementation is through the TT-CMM a LL scalar may be applied to table 3 catch limits.
- three HCR pairs (LL-favoured, PS-favoured and intermediate) will be used for testing of the MP. Actual implementation may occur at finer increments of variation between FAD open period and LL catch.
- Catches for fisheries not directly controlled by the MP are assumed to remain at fixed recent catch levels.
- The overlap area should be outside core MP control and addressed when translating MP outputs to implementing arrangements.

4 Considerations and decision points for future meetings

4.1 BMW02

The current range of design scenarios (4 areas; 4 TRPs) tested across 3 HCR pair scenarios (LL-favoured, FAD-favoured, neutral) gives rise to 48 sets of results for a single HCR formulation. If alternative HCR formulations are to be considered, the range of scenarios across which they are tested will need to be reduced.

The priority for BMW02 will therefore be for CCMs to understand the design, function and implementation of the MP, and to narrow down as much as possible the range of MP design scenarios under consideration. Narrowing down the range of design options will be necessary if additional HCR formulations and sensitivity analyses are to be provided to WCPFC23.

Areas where BMW02 can reduce options for design considerations:

- Areas and fisheries of application.
- TRP options.

To date, evaluations have focussed on a single HCR formulation (i.e. the functional form in terms of length of 'Hillary step', gradient of slope when off the step, etc.). A subset of evaluations for an alternative formulation have been performed to inform BMW02 of the implications (see WCPFC-BMW02-WP05 and WP06). The step height of the HCR is determined by the nuclear grid, CCMs may wish to investigate alternative HCR formulations when off the step, noting the requirement to keep the range of design options tractable.

The evaluations conducted so far, and the decision points in this document, assume that the LL catch and PS FAD open period can be negotiated at each implementation of the MP. BMW02 should consider how to proceed with negotiations each management period.

BMW02 may also consider the issues identified in section 3 for which there is tentative agreement, as well as any additional issues not addressed by BMW01 that may include:

- values assumed for baselines and fixed catches for fisheries not controlled by the MP (see WCPFC-BMW02-WP03 for details):
 - Catches of the Hawaiian longline fishery.
 - Catches of domestic fisheries of Indonesia and Philippines.
 - Catches of SIDs longline fisheries (where implementation is through the TT-CMM).
- Robustness and sensitivity scenarios - noting these are under development following revisions to the OM grid.
 - Alternative historical catch levels in domestic fisheries of ID and PH.
 - Reduced recruitment scenarios
- Proposed approach for determining outcomes for yellowfin tuna under the mixed fishery approach (see WCPFC-BMW02-WP07).

BMW02 may need to prioritise work to be performed between BMW02 and WCPFC23.

4.2 Special SC

The operating models (OMs) for bigeye tuna in the WCPO could not be agreed at SC22. A revised OM grid, taking account of the requests of SC22, is presented in WCPFC-BMW02-WP02, and forms the basis of the testing of candidate MPs presented in WCPFC-BMW02-WP05.

A special meeting of the SC will be convened immediately prior to WCPFC23 to:

- Review and adopt the revised OM grid.
- Review and adopt the estimation method. (the EM has been re-tested under the revised OM grid, see WCPFC-BMW02-WP02).
- Review any other technical aspects of the MP and advise the Commission accordingly.

4.3 WCPFC23

Under the WCPFC harvest strategy timetable, the Commission is scheduled to adopt an MP for WCPO bigeye tuna at WCPFC23. This involves identifying a single preferred option for:

- the areas and fisheries of application,
- the TRP,
- the formulation (shape) of the HCR.

The selection of a single option for the areas and fisheries of application and TRP will identify a single nuclear grid that specifies the range of permissible LL catch and PS FAD open period combinations that are consistent with achieving that TRP. The selection of a single HCR formulation enables HCRs to be derived from this grid to set fishing opportunities for any given stock status and any combination of LL catch and PS FAD open period.

4.4 WCPFC-SC23

The adopted estimation method (EM) will be run in 2027 and the results presented to SC23. The EM will provide the estimate of stock status for input to the HCR. SC23 will:

- Review the EM run (which will include data to 2025) and agree the HCR inputs.
- Provide advice to the Commission on the running of the EM and the HCR inputs.

4.5 WCPFC24

Under the adopted MP (as agreed at WCPFC23) the areas and fisheries of application, the TRP and the HCR formulation have been agreed. From this, a nuclear grid has been determined. The output of the EM (stock status), for input to the HCR, is available.

It only remains to agree the proportional split of LL catch and FAD open period from the range of permissible combinations.

- agree proportional split for LL catch and PS FAD open period.
- determine new limits from the resulting pair of HCRs

5 YFT under the mixed fishery approach

Under the mixed fishery approach there is no specific MP for yellowfin tuna in the WCPO. Instead, catches of yellowfin are determined from the combined outcomes of the MPs for SKJ, BET and SPA. However, it is still necessary to test outcomes for yellowfin under an MSE framework to ensure that management outcomes for the stock and fishery are likely to be met.

SC22 agreed to adopt the YFT OM grid and supported the YFT MSE framework. Initial evaluations were presented to SC22, but should be considered preliminary at this stage. Evaluations for yellowfin tuna will be updated once a refined subset of bigeye MP scenarios has been identified.

The preliminary evaluations indicate that the proposed WCPFC mixed fishery harvest strategy approach is expected to maintain the stock of yellowfin tuna within safe biological limits. However, the current management objective to maintain the stock around the 2012-2015 average depletion level may not be achieved.

WCPFC22 agreed to take a sequenced approach to the determination of reference points for BET and YFT in which the TRP for BET would be identified first and the TRP for YFT would subsequently be identified from the range of possible options. In this approach that TRP would be defined from the mixed fishery evaluations following the adopted SKJ, SPA and BET MPs (see WCPFC-BMW02-WP07).

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge funding for this work from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) funded project “Sustainable Pacific Fisheries”.

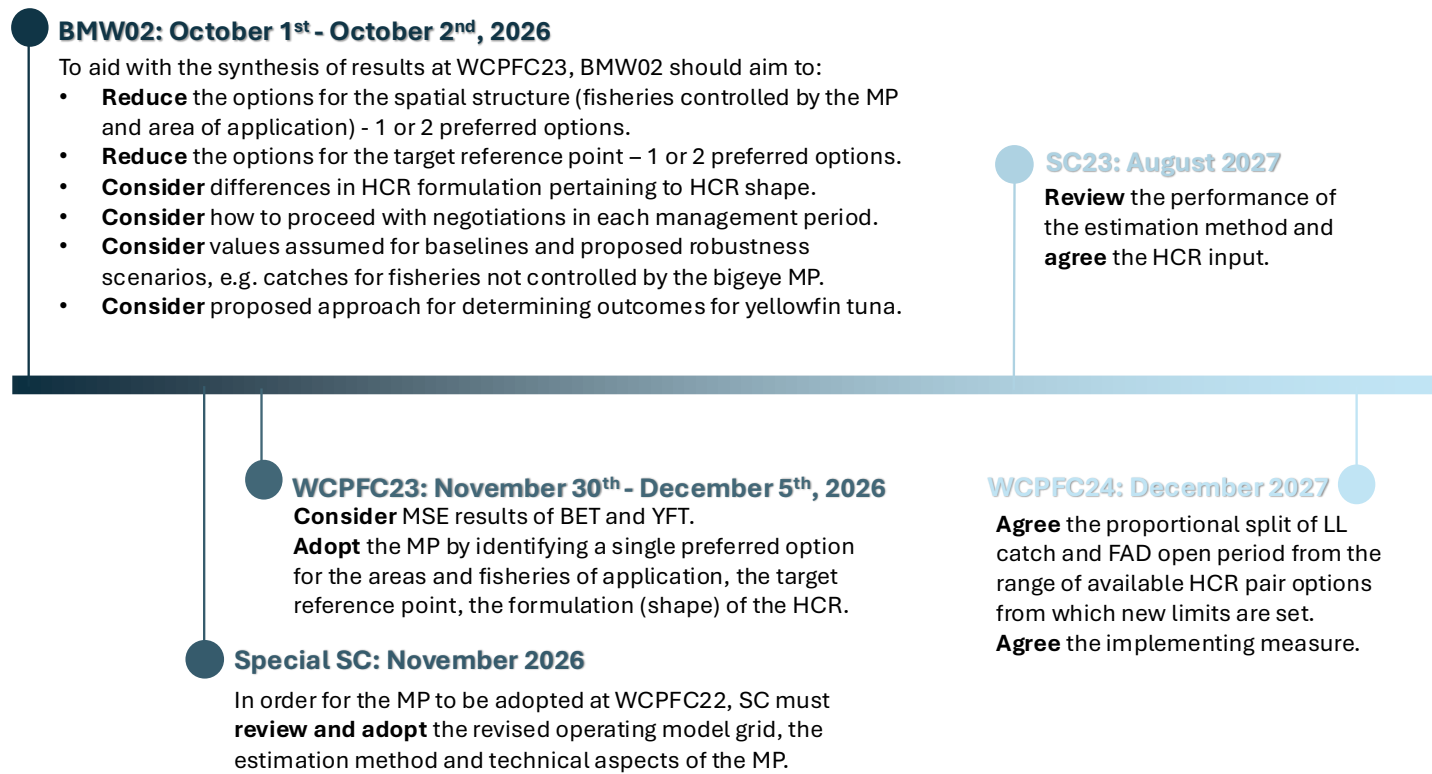


Figure 1: Summary timeline for the development, adoption and implementation of the WCPO bigeye MP.