



2005 Market Street, Suite 1700  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-7077

901 E St., NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20004-2008  
[www.pewenvironment.org](http://www.pewenvironment.org)

Square du Bastion 1A boîte 5  
1050 Brussels, Belgium

Studio 10, Tiger House Burton Street  
London WC1H 1BY, United Kingdom

**The Pew Charitable Trusts**  
**Statement to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**  
**10th Regular Session of the Northern Committee**  
**1 September 2014 - 4 September 2014 - Fukuoka, Japan**

The Pew Charitable Trusts is pleased to participate in the 10th Regular Session of the Northern Committee (NC10) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) as an observer. Pew looks forward to engaging with this Committee as it undertakes its important work of recommending conservation and management measures for the species under its purview.

The status of the Pacific bluefin tuna population is well known. The latest stock assessment conducted by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) found that the stock has decreased by 96% from its historic size and recent catch of juvenile fish constitute nearly 98% of the total catch. The assessment also found that fishing mortality has risen for the majority of age classes from 2002-04 levels, despite management measures mandating decreases. Additionally, projections showed that the current basin-wide management measures would not lead to an increase of the population in the future.

The ISC report also included a rebuilding analysis that contained projections of the effects of a range of management scenarios and the likelihood of meeting several rebuilding targets under a 10- or 15-year rebuilding program. Of the seven scenarios analyzed, only one predicted an increase in spawning biomass if the current low recruitment continues. This scenario included a WCPO annual catch limit of 4,570 mt for juveniles (fish less than 30kg) and WCPO total fishing mortality limit that equaled the average mortality seen between 2002-2004. It is important to note that even though this scenario projected population growth, it may not be conservative enough to lead to timely rebuilding and therefore these management measures should be seen as the minimum required action. For example, under this scenario, there is a 0% chance of rebuilding to 25%SSB<sub>0</sub> and only a 2% chance of rebuilding to 20%SSB<sub>0</sub> within 10 years if low recruitment continues.

In order to ensure that the Pacific bluefin population is able to rebuild in a timely manner, Pew strongly urges the Northern Committee to recommend a management measure with the following elements:

- An annual juvenile (fish less than 30kg) catch limit of no more than 4,570 metric tons.
- A mandatory annual catch limit for adult fish (greater than 30kg) of no more than 6500 mt (the approximate average adult mortality seen between 2002-2004).
- A minimum size limit of 20kg.
- The development of a rebuilding plan and associated catch limits that lead to a population of at least 25%SSB<sub>0</sub> within 10 years with at least a 60% probability of success.

Without immediate action at this year's Northern Committee meeting, the status and future of Pacific bluefin tuna will continue to worsen. The members of the Northern Committee have a responsibility to act to help reverse the decline of the Pacific bluefin population and set the species on the path to recovery. However, if the WCPFC and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission do not act this year to reduce fishing mortality of Pacific bluefin tuna in line with scientific advice, the only other management options available would be a basin-wide fishery suspension or trade restrictions.