



TECHNICAL AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
Twelfth Regular Session
21 – 27 September 2016
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

**COMMISSION HARVEST STRATEGY AND CONSULTATIVE DRAFT
OF A BRIDGING CMM ON TROPICAL TUNAS**

WCPFC-TCC12-2016-21
15 July 2016

WCPFC Circular 2016/34

**TO ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS, COOPERATING NON-MEMBERS AND
PARTICIPATING TERRITORIES**

Circular No.: 2016/34

Date: 15 July 2016

No. pages: 13

**Preparation for 2016 WCPFC Meetings: Commission's Harvest Strategy and
Tropical Tunas Draft CMM**

Dear All,

In preparation for the upcoming series of 2016 WCPFC meetings, I have prepared two separate documents for the early consideration of CCMs.

The first relates to Management Objectives pursuant to the Commission's Harvest Strategy contained in CMM 2014-06. The 2016 Harvest Strategy Work Plan tasks the Commission with recording Management Objectives for South Pacific albacore, bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin. Considerable effort has already been undertaken on this work through the series of Management Options Workshops and I am proposing that the Commission builds on those efforts. The attached Cover Notes provide a more thorough explanation of the issue.

The second document is a Consultative Draft of a Bridging CMM on Tropical Tunas to succeed the current CMM 2015-01, which is set to expire at the end of 2017. The Consultative Draft follows past practice in the Commission of holding discussions as early as possible to allow for broad and thorough consultation well in advance of the time when a measure needs to be adopted. Likewise, the attached Cover Notes to this document will elaborate further on the Draft.

I am requesting all CCMs to begin reviewing these documents as soon as possible and be prepared to discuss the Consultative Draft beginning at TCC12. I am also asking that all CCMs review the relevant material and be prepared to record Harvest Strategy Management Objectives for the four main tuna species at the December Annual Session.

Any comments or questions can be directed to me at rhea.moss-christian@wcpfc.int.

Sincerely,



Rhea Moss-Christian
Chair

Draft Management Objectives under the Harvest Strategy Approach

Cover Notes

At WCPFC11 in Apia, Samoa, the Commission adopted CMM 2014-06 on *Establishing a Harvest Strategy for Key Fisheries and Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean*. In 2015, the Commission adopted a Work Plan for the Adoption of Harvest Strategies to cover activities from 2015-2018. In 2016, the Commission has a number of tasks to try and achieve under that Work Plan, among which is the task to *record* management objectives for each of the four tuna species covered under the Harvest Strategy:

It is proposed that the Commission can initially ‘record’ a range of candidate management objectives rather than ‘agree’ management objectives. This will allow development of relevant performance measures for management strategy evaluation. It is noted that the Commission has previously recorded a range of candidate objectives for tuna stocks and fisheries, including those in the final ‘Report of the Expert Working Group Management Objectives, Performance Indicators and Reference Points’ (MOW2-IP/01Rev 1), which was developed in the course of the first two Management Objectives Workshops (2012 and 2013) and accepted by WCPFC10. (Agreed Work Plan)

Background

From 2012-2015, a series of discussions took place through the Management Options Workshops, the first of which took place in 2012 immediately prior to WCPFC9, with two subsequent MOW’s in 2013 and 2014 and a Harvest Strategy Workshop in 2015.

Through the MOW process, considerable discussion took place amongst stakeholders on increasing understanding of management objectives and frameworks, indicators and reference points. Although the MOW’s were convened as informal meetings of stakeholders and had no formal standing within the Commission, the discussions nevertheless have contributed to a basis for the Commission to later adopt the Harvest Strategy approach outlined in CMM 2014-06.

Following MOW1, the Commission agreed at WCPFC9 to a process for future action on Management Objectives, contained in Attachment X of the WCPFC9 Summary Report. That process saw the convening of an expert group to develop a candidate list of management objectives, performance indicators, and reference points (known as the “strawman proposal”) for each of the following major fisheries:

- Tropical longline
- Purse seine
- Southern longline
- Pacific bluefin tuna
- North Pacific albacore

Following a series of comments and revisions through the 2013 SC, NC, and TCC meetings, the strawman proposal was presented to MOW2 in 2013 for further

refinement. A final draft was discussed by MOW2 and presented to the Commission at WCPFC10 (*see WCPFC10-2013-15b; MOW2 Report contained in WCPFC10-2013-15a*).

WCPFC10 **accepted** the strawman proposal and tasked the Scientific Services Provider with further work related to skipjack TRP, harvest control rules, and performance indicators. The Commission also agreed to hold a third MOW in 2014.

MOW3 met in 2014 immediately prior to WCPFC11 and considered a management framework based on a harvest strategy approach. While not a direct outfall of the MOW process, a harvest strategy CMM was later adopted by WCPFC11 and builds on the discussions that took place in the first three MOW's. The Commission had no further discussions to elaborate on or refine the strawman proposal.

WCPFC13

The 2016 Harvest Strategy Work Plan tasks the Commission with *recording* management objectives for South Pacific albacore, skipjack, bigeye, and yellowfin. In accordance with CMM 2014-06, harvest strategies for Pacific bluefin and North Pacific albacore will be developed by the Northern Committee. Note that we are not aiming to *agree* on management objectives, which can come at a later stage. But having a set of recorded management objectives will be important for developing other elements of the harvest strategy, e.g. reference points, risk levels and, in particular performance indicators which tell us how well proposed harvest strategies meet the various objectives.

In using the candidate management objectives from the MOW strawman proposal as a starting point for discussions at WCPFC13, I am attempting to draw on work that has already taken place, with the intent to build on that work to help us move forward at WCPFC13. My goal in December is to see the Commission *record* candidate management objectives for each of the four main tuna stocks, in accordance with the Harvest Strategy Work Plan.

CCMs are requested to review the attached management objectives that are exactly as those contained in the original MOW strawman proposal and be prepared to accept these at WCPFC13 as *recorded management objectives* for purposes of furthering additional harvest strategy elements set out in CMM 2014-06.

**Recorded Management Objectives for the
Tropical Longline, Purse Seine, and Southern Longline Fisheries**
(South Pacific albacore, skipjack, bigeye, and yellowfin)

MOW1 selected a wide range of objectives summarized under the major groups of Biological, Economic, Social, and Ecosystem.

For simplicity, the below Table reflects only the candidate management objectives that are contained in the original strawman proposal. The full strawman proposal can be found beginning at page 16 of WCPFC10-2013-15b.

Tropical Longline Fishery (20N-20S; YFT, BET and ALB)	
Type	Objective
Biological	Maintain YFT and BET biomass above levels that provide fishery sustainability throughout their range
Economic	Maximize economic yield from the fishery
	Maintain acceptable CPUE
	Increase fisheries-based development within developing States' economies
	Optimize fishing effort
	Maximize SIDS revenues from resource rents
	Stability and continuity of market supply
Social	Affordable protein for coastal communities
	Local market price of tuna
	Employment opportunities
	Maintain/develop domestic fishery
	Human resource development
	Avoid adverse impacts on subsistence and small scale fishers
Ecosystem	Minimize fishery impact on ecosystem function
	Minimize catch of non-target species

Purse Seine Fishery (20N-20S; including Indonesia and Philippines)	
Type	Objective
Biological	Maintain SKJ and YFT & BET biomass at or above levels that provide fishery sustainability throughout their range
Economic	Maximize economic yield from the fishery <i>Alternate: Enabling economic yields to be maximized</i>
	Increase fisheries based development within developing States /SIDS economies, especially onshore processing capacity
	Maintain acceptable CPUE
	Optimize fishing effort
	Maximize SIDS revenues from resource rents

	Catch stability
	Stability, predictability and continuity of market supply
Social	Affordable protein for coastal communities
	Food security in developing States (import replacement)
	Minimize impact on small- scale artisanal fisheries
	Avoid adverse impacts on subsistence and small scale fishers
	Employment Opportunities
Ecosystem	Minimize fishery impact on ecosystem function
	Minimize catch of non-target species

Southern Longline Fishery (WCPFC Area, south of Equator)	
Type	Objective
Biological	Maintain ALB (and SWO) biomass at or above levels that provide stock sustainability throughout their range
Economic	Maximize economic yield from the fishery
	Increase fisheries based development within developing States' economies, especially the SIDS
	Maintain acceptable CPUE
	Optimize capacity
	Catch stability
	Maximize SIDS revenues from resource rents
	Stability and continuity of market supply
Social	Affordable protein for coastal communities
	Employment Opportunities
	Maintain/develop domestic fishery
	Human resource development
	Avoid adverse impacts on small scale and subsistence fishers
Ecosystem	Minimize fishery impact on ecosystem function
	Minimize catch of non-target species

Bridging Tropical Tuna CMM

Chair's Consultative Draft

Cover Notes

In anticipation of the coming to the end of the current conservation and management measure (CMM 2015-01) on the tropical tuna species at the end of 2017, the Chair has prepared a draft successor CMM to initiate consultations early with CCMs. Beginning in 2016, consultations will be held with CCMs with a view to develop a CMM that can be adopted in the WCPFC14 Regular Annual Session in December, 2017. Like in the past, this process should provide sufficient lead time to undertake the necessary and broadest consultations to develop the successor CMM on tropical tuna species.

The Consultative Draft is framed as a Bridging CMM to acknowledge the work that the Commission has sanctioned on the development of harvest strategies for the four tropical tuna species, namely South Pacific Albacore, Bigeye, Skipjack and Yellowfin. Ultimately, the work on the harvest strategies should ideally provide the framework for the management of those species.

The Consultative Draft builds on the existing CMM and seeks to simplify its structure by streamlining it with other CMMs. In that regard, there is a host of issues like the requirements on charters, non-parties, VMS, ROP and data provision that are omitted from the Consultative Draft and are proposed for inclusion in other relevant and more appropriate CMMs.

The Consultative Draft includes on the right side of the page a tap of the origin of the various provisions to indicate where the text for those provisions were from or based on.

The **Preamble** includes provisions directly lifted from or based on the existing CMM 2015-01. It also includes new provisions that acknowledge the latest management measures adopted by the Commission and those adopted by some CCMs for their in-zone management.

The **Purpose** accounts for the transitional nature of the proposed CMM and acknowledges the Commission's ongoing work on the harvest strategies.

The **Objectives** are framed in terms of the limit and target reference points for each of the species as adopted by the Commission. It reflects the ongoing nature of the discussions of the reference points and will be adjusted as decisions are taken.

The **Principles for Application** section seeks to capture the key principles that underpin the application of the CMM. They are principles already agreed generally and lifted directly from the Convention and the related CMM. The three principles included are those on compatibility, area of application, and on the special requirements of small island developing states.

The **Species / Stock Management** section provides for the substantive management measures for each species. In its current draft form it simply provides a list of elements for consideration and is set against the backdrop of the latest scientific advice and decision on reference points for each of the species. The elements include but are not limited to acceptable levels of risk, existing in-zone and high seas measures.

**Draft Bridging CMM on Tropical Tunas
(Chair's Consultative Draft)**

PREAMBLE

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

2015-01
PP1

Recalling that since 1999, in the Multilateral High Level Conferences, the Preparatory Conferences, and in the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (the Commission), a number of resolutions and Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) have been developed to mitigate the overfishing of bigeye and yellowfin tuna and to limit the growth of fishing capacity in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and that these measures have been unsuccessful in either restricting the apparent growth of fishing capacity or in reducing the fishing mortality of bigeye or juvenile yellowfin tuna;

Recalling that the objective of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (the Convention) is to ensure through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the highly migratory fish stocks of the Western and Central Pacific Ocean in accordance with the 1982 Convention and the Agreement;

2015-01
PP2

Recalling further the final statement of the Chairman of the Multilateral High Level Conferences in 2000 that: "It is important to clarify, however, that the Convention applies to the waters of the Pacific Ocean. In particular, the western side of the Convention Area is not intended to include waters of South-East Asia which are not part of the Pacific Ocean, nor is it intended to include waters of the South China Sea as this would involve States which are not participants in the Conference" (Report of the Seventh and Final Session, 30th August- 5 September 2000, p.29);

2015-01
PP3

Recognizing that the Scientific Committee has determined that the bigeye stock is overfished, requiring reductions in fishing mortality to rebuild the stock; and that the yellowfin stock is currently being fished at capacity, requiring prevention of any further increases in fishing mortality to ensure that the stock remains at or above levels consistent with MSY; (Note: this will be revisited to reflect stock status following the 2017 assessment.)

Based on
2015-01
PP4

Recognizing that the Scientific Committee has advised the Commission that longline fishing mortality and longline catch of South Pacific Albacore be reduced to avoid further decline in the vulnerable biomass so that economically viable catch rates can be maintained; (Note: this may need to be updated following SC12.)

2015-02
PP1

Recognizing further the interactions that occur between the fisheries for bigeye, yellowfin, skipjack tuna and south Pacific albacore;

2015-01
PP5

Noting that Article 30(1) of the Convention requires the Commission to give full recognition to the special requirements of developing States that are Parties to the Convention, in particular small island developing States and Territories and possessions, in relation to the conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks in the Convention Area and development of fisheries on such stocks, including the provision of financial, scientific and technological assistance;

2015-01
PP6

Noting further that Article 30(2) of the Convention requires the Commission to take into account the special requirements of developing States, in particular Small Island developing States and Territories. This includes ensuring that conservation and management measures adopted by it do not result in transferring, directly or indirectly, a disproportionate burden of conservation action onto developing States, Parties and Territories;

2015-01
PP7

Noting Article 8(1) of the Convention requires compatibility of conservation and management measures established for the high seas and those adopted for areas under national jurisdiction;

2015-01
PP8

Noting Article 8(4) of the Convention which requires the Commission to pay special attention to the high seas in the Convention Area that are surrounded by exclusive economic zones (EEZs);

2015-01
PP9

Noting that the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) have adopted and implemented “A Third Arrangement Implementing The Nauru Agreement Setting Forth Additional Terms And Conditions Of Access To The Fisheries Zones Of The Parties”

Based on
2015-01
PP10

Noting further that the Parties to the Nauru Agreement have adopted and implemented a Vessel Day Scheme for the longline fishery and a registry for FADs in the Zones of the Parties and that the Parties to the Tokelau Arrangement have adopted [and implemented] a system of zone-based catch limits for South Pacific Albacore in the Zones of the Parties.

New

Acknowledging that the Commission has adopted a limit reference point (LRP) for South Pacific albacore, bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tuna of 20% of the estimated recent average spawning biomass in the absence of fishing, and, for skipjack tuna, has also agreed to an interim target reference point (TRP) of 50% of the recent average spawning biomass in the absence of fishing (CMM 2015-06);

Acknowledging that the Commission has adopted CMM 2014-06 on Establishing a Harvest Strategy for Key Fisheries and Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean and a Work Plan to guide the development of key components of a Harvest Strategy, including the recording of management objectives;

New

Adopts in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention, the following Conservation and Management Measure with respect to South Pacific albacore, bigeye, yellowfin, and skipjack tuna:

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this measure is to provide for a robust transitional management regime that ensures the sustainability of South Pacific albacore, bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin while the Commission continues to develop and establish harvest strategies pursuant to CMM 2014-06.

New

OBJECTIVES

2. The objectives of this measure are to ensure that:

Based on
2015-01
OP 1

a. Reference points

The stock-specific objectives of this measure are amended or replaced with target reference points following their adoption by the Commission. Pending their adoption, all stocks are managed so that their adult biomass remains above the adopted limit reference point of 20% of the estimated recent average spawning biomass in the absence of fishing, ($SB_{F=0,t1-t2}$) with high probability.]

(Note: Commission would need to define "high probability".)

b. South Pacific Albacore

Pending agreement on a target reference point, the spawning biomass of South Pacific albacore tuna is maintained at or above the most recently assessed level (for 2013, 40% of spawning biomass in the absence of fishing using the base case assessment assumptions). In addition, the fishing mortality rate for South Pacific Albacore is maintained at a level no greater than F_{msy} , i.e. $F/F_{msy} \leq 1$.

c. Bigeye

Pending agreement on a target reference point, the spawning biomass of BET is rebuilt to [xx% of the spawning biomass in the absence of fishing within x years] [at least 20% of the spawning biomass in the absence of fishing (i.e. the LRP) with at least xx% probability]. In addition, the fishing mortality rate for bigeye tuna is reduced to a level no greater than F_{msy} , i.e. $F/F_{msy} \leq 1$.

d. Skipjack

Pending agreement on a formal target reference point, the spawning biomass of skipjack tuna is maintained on average at a level consistent with the interim target reference point of 50% of the spawning biomass in the absence of fishing, adopted in accordance with CMM 2015-06.

2015-06

e. Yellowfin

Pending agreement on a target reference point, the spawning biomass of yellowfin tuna is maintained at or above the most recently assessed level (for 2012, 38% of spawning biomass in the absence of fishing (Note: to be updated in 2017.) In addition, the fishing mortality rate for yellowfin is maintained at a level no greater than F_{msy} , i.e. $F/F_{msy} \leq 1$.

PRINCIPLES FOR APPLICATION

3. The following principles shall guide the application of this measure:

a. Compatibility

Conservation and management measures established for the high seas and those adopted for areas under national jurisdiction shall be compatible in order to ensure conservation and management of South Pacific albacore, bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna stocks in their entirety. Measures shall ensure, at a minimum, that stocks are maintained at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield, pending agreement on target reference points as part of the harvest strategy approach, as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors including the special requirements of developing States in the Convention Area as expressed by Article 5 of the Convention.

Based on
Art 5 & 8 of
Convention

b. Area of Application

This Measure applies to all areas of high seas and all EEZs in the Convention Area except where otherwise stated in the Measure. Coastal states are encouraged to take measures in archipelagic waters and territorial seas which are consistent with the objectives of this Measure and to inform the WCPFC Secretariat of the relevant measures that they will apply in these waters.

Based on
2015-01
OP 11 &
OP 12

c. Small Island Developing States

Unless otherwise stated, nothing in this Measure shall prejudice the rights and obligations of those small island developing State Members and Participating Territories in the Convention Area seeking to develop their domestic fisheries.

Based on
2015-01
OP 17

SPECIES/STOCK MANAGEMENT

This section acknowledges the current approach taken thus far in the development of a harvest strategy with respect to each species, and provides a bridge to the development of a harvest strategy framework that is compatible with that agreed in CMM 2014-06.

4. Albacore (South Pacific) – LRP is 20%

Elements for Consideration

Latest (2015) SC advice is:

Despite the fact that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, SC11 reiterates the advice that longline fishing mortality and longline catch be reduced to avoid further decline in the vulnerable biomass so that economically viable catch rates can be maintained.

Acceptable Level of Risk – pending WCPFC13 decision

Target Reference Point – pending WCPFC 13 decision

Existing in zone measures

Tokelau Arrangement

Existing high seas measures
Capacity limits (CMM 2015-02)

Other commercial fisheries

5. Bigeye – LRP is 20%

Elements for Consideration

Latest (2015) SC advice is:

SC10 recommended that fishing mortality on WCPO bigeye tuna be reduced. A 36% reduction in fishing mortality from the average levels for 2008–2011 would be expected to return the fishing mortality rate to FMSY. This reduction of at least 36% should also allow the stock to rebuild above the LRP over a period of time. This recommended level of reduction in fishing mortality could also be stated as a minimum 33% reduction from the 2004 level of fishing mortality, or a minimum 26% reduction from the average 2001–2004 level of fishing mortality.

STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNED FOR 2017

Rebuilding timeline, AGREED BY WCPFC13

Acceptable Level of Risk – pending WCPFC13 decision

TRP – pending WCPFC14 decision

Existing in zone measures

PNA Longline VDS

FAD closure/limits

Catch retention for purse seine vessels

Existing high seas measures

FAD closure (2017)/limits

HS pocket closures

Catch retention for purse seine vessels

WCPFC region-wide measures

Flag-based longline bigeye catch limits

Other commercial fisheries

Capacity Management

Longline freezer vessels

Ice chilled LL vessels landing exclusively fresh fish

6. Skipjack – objective is 50% TRP (interim); LRP is 20%

Elements for Consideration

Latest (2015) SC advice is:

SC10 recommends that the Commission take action to avoid further increases in fishing mortality and to keep the skipjack tuna stock around current levels, with tighter purse-seine control rules and advocates for the adoption of TRPs and harvest control rules.

Acceptable Level of Risk – pending WCPFC13 decision

Existing in zone measures

PNA Purse Seine VDS

Nominated zone-based effort/catch limits

Existing high seas measures

VDS limits

Other commercial fisheries

Capacity Management

Large Scale Purse Seine Vessels

7. Yellowfin – LRP is 20%

Elements for Consideration

Latest (2015) SC advice is:

SC recommended that the catch of WCPO yellowfin tuna should not be increased from 2012 levels, which exceeded MSY, and measures should be implemented to maintain current spawning biomass levels until the Commission can agree on an appropriate TRP.

STOCK ASSESSMENT PLANNED FOR 2017

Acceptable Level of Risk – pending WCPFC13 decision

Obligation to adopt specific measures for yellowfin have been outstanding; only monthly reporting obligations have been in place.

PS effort limits designed for skipjack provide benefits for yellowfin.

FAD closures demonstrated no negative effects on yellowfin.

Other commercial fisheries

****Note:** *Issues relating to charters, non-parties, VMS, ROP, and data provision will be taken up through existing measures and requirements.*