

**The Pew Charitable Trusts**  
**Statement to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**  
**15<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Scientific Committee**  
**12-20 August 2019, Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia**

The Pew Charitable Trusts appreciates the opportunity to participate as an observer at the 15th Regular Session of the Scientific Committee (SC15) of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). WCPFC has made considerable progress over the past year in advancing the science needed to develop harvest strategies for tuna stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) in accordance with CMM 2014-06. Indeed, there are over 15 related papers on the agenda for SC15. Pew commends the SC, particularly the Science Service Provider, for this body of work, and urges SC15 to provide clear recommendations and advice on each of the items slated to be decided and/or discussed by the Commission in 2019 in order to continue this progress, including the following:

- **Provide advice to enable the Commission to adopt target reference points (TRPs) for bigeye and yellowfin tunas at WCPFC16 in accordance with the harvest strategy workplan.** In doing so, SC15 should recommend TRPs that imply a 5% risk of breaching the limit reference point, as that level of risk would be in keeping with the limit reference point-related principle of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement and would require little to no increase in biomass compared to SB<sub>2012-15</sub>. TRPs that would lead to biomass declines in either stock would not be consistent with CMM 2018-01, paragraphs 12 and 14;
- **Provide feedback on the structure and initial results of the skipjack management strategy evaluation (MSE).** This could include suggestions for additional candidate harvest control rules (HCR) and on the presentation of results, including the interactive PIMPLE tool, which should facilitate better understanding of the performance of the candidate HCRs.
- **Recommend the Commission adopt the terms of reference for a Science and Management Dialogue meeting,** noting the number of decisions that would benefit from the close interactions of scientists, managers and other stakeholders, and specify that the meeting should occur annually starting in 2020 in concert with another intersessional meeting, if appropriate;
- **Provide advice on the progress of designing an MSE for South Pacific albacore and recommend steps as appropriate to ensure the work proceeds as quickly as possible;** This should include feedback on the proposed reference set of operating models and candidate empirical HCRs.
- **Recommend agenda items for the additional time devoted to harvest strategies at WCPFC16, noting what advice is needed from the Commission to continue to advance the scientific process, including MSE;** and
- **Provide a clear request on the budget requirements to ensure harvest strategies are completed for all tuna species no later than 2022 in accordance with the WCPFC workplan and MSC requirement.**