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REBUILDING PLAN FOR NORTH PACIFIC STRIPED MARLIN

**WCPFC16-2019-DP12_rev1
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SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

REBUILDING PLAN FOR NORTH PACIFIC STRIPED MARLIN

**Proposal by the United States of America
to the
Sixteenth Regular Session of the
Commission for the Conservation and Management of
Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean**

REBUILDING PLAN FOR NORTH PACIFIC STRIPED MARLIN

Explanatory Note

As North Pacific striped marlin is generally not targeted, it would be more appropriate to develop a rebuilding plan for this stock rather than a harvest strategy. This rebuilding plan could be incorporated as appropriate into harvest strategies for other fisheries.

The primary objective in any rebuilding plan is to rebuild the stock to a specific level (“rebuilding target”) in a specific time (“rebuilding period”), and for the purpose of designing conservation and management measures to achieve that objective, this plan includes a specific probability for achieving the objective.

Given the WCPFC’s hierarchical approach for setting reference points, and that the stock-recruitment relationship for North Pacific striped marlin is not well known, the rebuilding target should be expressed in terms relative to the estimated unfished spawning stock size.

With respect to the specific proportion of the unfished spawning stock size that should be the rebuilding target, we note that Article 6.1 of the WCPF Convention, by reference to Annex II of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement, provides that “For overfished stocks, the biomass which would produce maximum sustainable yield [B_{MSY}] can serve as a rebuilding target.” Twenty percent of the unfished spawning stock size has been recommended as a reasonable proxy for B_{MSY} for stocks with at least average resilience,¹ and it has been used as a reference point in place of B_{MSY} in various fisheries. The WCPFC has adopted $20\%SSB_{current,F=0}$ as the limit reference point—as a proxy for B_{MSY} —for the three tropical tuna stocks and for North Pacific and South Pacific albacore.

Taking into consideration the stock size projections prepared by the ISC in association with the most recent stock assessment, which considered “short term” and “long term” alternative future recruitment scenarios, this plan sets the rebuilding period at 20 years. The probability is set at 60%.

¹ For example: Mace P.M. 1994. Relationships between common biological reference points used as thresholds and targets of fisheries management strategies. *Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* 51:110-122.

Interim Rebuilding Plan for North Pacific Striped Marlin

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

Recognizing that the latest stock assessment of North Pacific striped marlin, completed by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) in 2019, indicated that current spawning stock biomass is depleted ($SSB_{2018}/SSB_0 = 0.05$) and the average fishing mortality rate in 2015-2017 was greater than the fishing mortality rate associated with MSY ($F/F_{MSY} = 1.07$);

Adopts in accordance with Article 10 of the WPCF Convention, the following rebuilding plan for North Pacific striped marlin:

Rebuilding Objective

The interim rebuilding target for North Pacific striped marlin is 20% $SSB_{F=0}$, to be reached by [2039][2029], with at least 60% probability. This rebuilding objective will be subject to further consideration and decision at WCPFC17, taking into account any additional scientific advice.

Rebuilding Strategy

~~The Commission will develop and adopt conservation and management measures that are expected, based on the best scientific information available, to rebuild the stock in accordance with the rebuilding objective.~~ Beginning in 2020, and based on the best scientific information available, members will develop measures to rebuild the stock in accordance with the rebuilding objective, with the aim of adopting revised conservation and management measures for North Pacific striped marlin at WCPFC17. Members should consider reduced catch limits and retention, release, and gear requirements, among other potential tools.