



**COMMISSION
SIXTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea
5 – 11 December 2019

HARVEST STRATEGY FOR NORTH PACIFIC SWORDFISH FISHERIES

Introduction and scope

This harvest strategy applies to swordfish stocks that occur in the Convention Area north of 20° North latitude, and associated fisheries. Although the provisions of this harvest strategy are expressed in terms of a single stock, they may be applied to multiple stocks as appropriate and as determined by the Northern Committee.

1. Management objectives

The management objective is to support thriving swordfish fisheries in the North Pacific while maintaining the stock size at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield. The Northern Committee will develop more refined management objectives.

2. Reference points

As a reliable estimate of steepness is available, the stock of north Pacific swordfish is to be treated as a Level 1 stock under the Commission's hierarchical approach for setting biological limit reference points. The limit reference point for the exploitation rate (F-limit) is F_{MSY} .

The Northern Committee will develop more refined management objectives, conduct any necessary further analysis, and specify a target reference point for the stock size (B-target) and/or the exploitation rate (F-target).

3. Acceptable levels of risk

In accordance with Article 6.1(a) of the Convention, the Northern Committee will recommend conservation and management measures as needed to ensure that the risk of the F-limit being exceeded is low.

4. Monitoring strategy

The ISC will periodically evaluate the stock size and exploitation rate with respect to the established reference points and the report will be presented to the Scientific Committee with a target frequency of no lower than once every four years.

5. Decision rules

F-limit rule: In the event that, based on information from the ISC and Scientific Committee, the average exploitation rate for the most recent period has been found, using the best point estimate, to exceed the F-limit, the Northern Committee will, at its next regular session or intersessionally if warranted, formulate conservation and management recommendations that are designed to reduce the fishing mortality rate below the F-limit as soon as feasible . In considering such recommendations, the difficulties of fleets not targeting swordfish should be addressed properly.

6. Performance evaluation

If and as more refined management objectives are developed for the stock and/or associated fisheries, the Northern Committee will work with the ISC and Scientific Committee to evaluate the likely performance of candidate target reference points and/or harvest control rules, including, if appropriate, through a rigorous management strategy evaluation.
