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EXPLANATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CMM 2010-04 (PBF)

WCPFC-NC8-2012/DP-01

JAPAN



FISHERIES AGENCY

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

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Professor Glenn Hurry
Executive Director
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
P.O. Box 2356, Kolonia,
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, 96941

Dear Executive Director Hurry,

In accordance with paragraph 4 of the conservation and management measure for Pacific bluefin tuna (CMM2010-04), Japan submits a brief report explaining measures and actions it has introduced and been implementing for Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) since the 6th Northern Committee meeting.

Overview of Japanese PBF Fisheries

Japan caught 12,676 tons of PBF on average in the years between 2002-2004, which are the reference years of the CMM 2010-04. Almost all PBF catch were made in the areas under the Japanese jurisdiction and primarily within the territorial waters and internal waters. Also, most of the fisheries activities targeting PBF are seasonal and those fishing vessels target other species outside the PBF fishing season.

The annual catches of PBF by major fishing gears on average in 2002-2004 were as follows: purse seine: 7,643 tons, troll: 2,149 tons, set net: 945 tons, longline: 1,317 tons, and other fisheries: 622 tons.

Management framework and catch trends of those fisheries before the strengthening of the PBF management were as follows:

(1) Purse seine fisheries are managed under the licensing system by the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The number of vessels has been decreasing year by year. The main target species of purse seine are jack mackerel and mackerel and PBF are caught only during its migration season in the following three fishing grounds: (i) western Japan ground: 0-1 year old fish are caught by 23 vessels. The catch had been increasing since

1990s. (ii) Sea of Japan ground: mainly adult fish are caught by 17 vessels. (iii) Pacific ground: mainly adult fish are caught by 24 vessels. The catch has declined substantially during this period. Therefore, it is considered important to control catch amount by purse seine fishery in western Japan ground.

(2) Troll is conducted by small artisanal vessels (smaller than 5 GRT) with one or two fishermen on board. This fishing is traditionally conducted throughout Japan, frequently in isolated islands and remote peninsulas. Most of the fishing grounds are within the territorial waters. The fishing season is a few months and those vessels are engaged in other fisheries such as squid jigging or bottom longlining when PBF does not migrate. Because of those circumstances, no management measures for PBF fishing was established either by the national nor prefectural government and therefore, it was impossible to identify even how many vessels were engaged in PBF fishery annually. On the other hand, since the PBF catch by troll calculated through sales slips from fish markets had been stable, the priority for the management of troll fishery was to understand the current situation for future effort management.

(3) Set nets are managed through the licensing system by the governors of prefectures. The catch of set nets fluctuates substantially year by year but was not increasing in the long run. The number of set net licensed was approximately 1,800. On the other hand, it was difficult for each prefectural government to comprehend the overall picture of PBF management and therefore it was important for the national government to set a grand policy towards the restriction of increase.

(4) Longline vessels are managed through ministerial licensing system. The main target species of longline are bigeye, yellowfin, and albacore and PBF catch by about 685 vessels is seasonal and requires different configuration of fishing gear. The catch is also decreasing.

(5) Most of other fisheries were managed through licensing system, but some of them allowed open entry. Their catch fluctuated but was not increasing in the long run. Therefore, it was considered important to comprehend the current situation for the future effort management of fisheries with open entry.

Measures Japan Introduced for PBF Management

As stated above, most of the Japanese PBF catch are made within the territorial or internal waters of Japan, where WCPFC CMMs are not legally applicable. However, the government of Japan has a policy of implementing a PBF conservation program applicable to the entire PBF fishing activities, based upon WCPFC decisions and ISC advice.

1. Purse seine fishery: Set catch limits

(1) Catch limit for juvenile fish

An annual catch limit of juvenile PBF – smaller than 30kg – has been in place for 2011 and 2012 in purse seine fishery operating the western part of Japan; the catch limit is 4,500mt, which is equal to 02-04 average catch and to a 26% reduction from 05-09 average catch. Also in the Pacific side, an annual catch limit of juvenile PBF at 500t, which is the average amount between 2002-2004, was introduced.

(2) Catch limit for adult fish

In addition to the above catch limit for juvenile fish, another catch limit of 2,000mt for adult PBF has been voluntarily introduced during July-August for 2011 and 2012 in purse seine fishery operating in the Sea of Japan.

2. Artisanal fisheries: Introduced a vessel registration system and mandatory reporting

For artisanal fishery – mostly troll fishery– operating in the Sea of Japan and Eastern China Sea, a registration scheme has been introduced as of April 1st, 2011, under which all small scale fishing vessels fishing for PBF are required to register. Such registration is accompanied by mandatory reporting of their catch. This registration scheme has been introduced to small scale fishing vessels operating in the Pacific side in April 1st, 2012. As of July 1st, 2012, 13,000 vessels –over 5,400 vessels are on the registration in the Sea of Japan and Eastern China Sea, and 7,600 vessels are on the registration in the Pacific side.

3. Set-net Fishery: Issued a guidance not to increase set-nets for PBF

In January 2011, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries issued an administrative guidance not to increase the number of licenses of set-nets for PBF to relevant prefectural governments which have the authority to manage this fishery.

4. Aquaculture: Introduced a registration system and mandatory reporting.

The fry used for PBF farming in Japan is mainly caught by troll fishery. Because of the stricter management of Atlantic bluefin tuna at ICCAT, it is concerned that PBF farming in Japan may increase further. Therefore, in order to collect necessary information, starting in April 2011, all PBF aquaculture sites are required to register and to report their farming activities, including information on caging and harvest. As of July 2012, 137 aquaculture sites are on the registration.

5. Import: Strengthened data collection

(1) Korea

Starting in January 2010, mandatory reporting for each import transaction has been tasked

to importers in case they intend to import PBF from Korea. From March 2011, the number of size categories in the reporting format has been expanded from 5 categories to 7 categories in order to acquire more precise data on import of juvenile fish:

Before February 2011:

smaller than 2kg, 2 - 3kg, 3 - 5kg, 5 – 50kg, over 50kg

After March 2011:

smaller than 2kg, 2 - 3kg, 3 - 5kg, 5 – 10kg, 10 – 30kg, 30 - 50kg, over 50kg

(2) Mexico

Starting in February 2011, mandatory reporting has been tasked to importers in case they intend to import PBF from Mexico.


6. Work with other IATTC members

(1) In May 2011, the NC chair held a meeting with IATTC members who have fisheries for PBF in the eastern Pacific. Japan assisted the NC Chair's work and joined the meeting.

(2) During the 82nd IATTC annual meeting held in July 2011 at La Jolla, the Director General of Fisheries Agency of Japan sent a letter to the Commissioner of Mexican Fisheries Agency (CONAPESCA) calling on Mexico to cooperate in establishing sound conservation and management measures for PBF in the eastern Pacific.

(3) During the 83rd IATTC annual meeting held in June 2012 at La Jolla, Japanese delegation cooperated with IATTC member countries so that Conservation and Management Measures for PBF was adopted.

Sincerely yours,



Takashi KOYA

Alternative Japanese Commissioner to WCPFC

Strengthened Plan of Management Scheme for Pacific Bluefin Tuna in Japan

		2010	2011	2012
Fishery management	Coastal fishery	Set net: Administrative instruction not to increase the number of licenses of set nets for PBF		
		Troll: Registration system and mandatory reporting for artisanal fishery in Sea of Japan and Eastern China Sea		
		Troll: Registration system and mandatory reporting for artisanal fishery in the Pacific side and Seto Inland Sea		
	Offshore fishery (Purse Seine)	Catch limit for juvenile and adult in purse seine fishery in Sea of Japan and Eastern China Sea		
		Catch limit for juvenile in purse seine fishery in Pacific side		
		Registration and mandatory reporting for farming activities		
Import management	Import from Korea	Publication of farming activities		
		Mandatory reporting for each import transaction		
	Import from Mexico	Request for trading companies not to increase import		
		Mandatory reporting for each import transaction		
	Request for trading companies not to increase import			
				Review domestic management plan based on new WCPFC GMM

Major PBF Fishing Ground Around Japanese Water by fishing gear

