



**NORTHERN COMMITTEE
SEVENTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING
5 – 7 October 2021**

**Chairs' Summary of the 6th Joint IATTC and WCPFC-NC Working Group Meeting on the
Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna**

WCPFC-NC17-2021/IP-05

JWG-06 Co-Chairs

**JOINT IATTC AND WCPFC-NC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA
SIXTH SESSION (JWG-06)**

ELECTRONIC MEETING
8am-11am, Japan Standard Time
27-29 July 2021

**CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE 6TH JOINT IATTC AND WCPFC-NC WORKING GROUP
MEETING ON THE MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA**

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the meeting

1. The 6th Session of the Joint IATTC and WCPFC-NC Working Group Meeting on the Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna (JWG06) was held online on 27-29 July 2021. The meeting was opened by co-chairs Mr. Masanori Miyahara (Japan, Northern Committee Chair) and Ms. Dorothy Lowman (USA, IATTC).

2. A list of participants to the JWG06 is included in **Annex A**.

Agenda Item 2. Adoption of Agenda and Meeting Procedures

3. Ms. Lowman welcomed participants and outlined the meeting procedures and the agenda.

4. The provisional agenda was adopted (**Annex B**).

Agenda Item 3. Scientific Information on Pacific Bluefin Tuna

3.1 Updates on the stock status of Pacific bluefin tuna

5. Dr. Shuya Nakatsuka (Japan), Chair of the ISC Pacific Bluefin Tuna Working Group (PBFWG), provided a report of the workgroup's intersessional workshop. The PBFWG reviewed 2020 catch data, abundance indices up to 2020, and the current stock assessment (conducted in March 2020), and discussed the management strategy evaluation (MSE) and close-kin mark recapture. The PBFWG also noted that there has been no new information in 2021 that necessitates a revision of the 2020 ISC stock status and conservation information on PBF.

6. Japan stated that it intends to transfer 250 tons of its catch limit for small PBF to large PBF until at least 2034 and requested that the ISC reflect this transfer into future stock assessment projections.

7. The US pointed out that the outcomes of this meeting may impact what projections are requested of the ISC PBFWG and that it was important to provide clear guidance to the ISC before the close of the meeting.

3.2 Reports from WCPFC-Scientific Committee (SC) and IATTC-Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

8. Dr. Alex da Silva (IATTC) presented a review of the results of the 2020 PBF stock assessment by the IATTC SAC, rebuilding targets and harvest strategies, and future PBF projections, as well as the joint recommendations of the IATTC staff and the SAC. The IATTC staff and the SAC recommends the extension

of the provisions of Resolution C-18-01, as already extended by Resolution C-20-02, and that the Commission take note that increased catches based on the scenarios analyzed are possible under the harvest strategy prepared by the joint tuna RFMOs Working Group. The choice of catch scenario should take into account the desired rebuilding rate and the distribution of catch between small and large bluefin.

9. The report of the 12th IATTC-SAC meeting was noted as reviewed.

10. The report of the 17th WCPFC-SC meeting was unavailable because it has not yet convened.

Agenda Item 4. Reports on the implementation of Pacific bluefin tuna measures

11. The Joint WG reviewed WCPFC and IATTC members' implementation reports on conservation and management measures for PBF.

12. Japan raised some questions on the USA reported 2020 recreational catch in the EPO and how recreational catch is managed with respect to IATTC obligations. The USA noted that it was the only country that reported on its recreational catch and would welcome others sharing information about their management of recreational PBF catch at future JWG meetings. There was agreement to continue discussing these issues on the margins.

13. Co-Chair Miyahara reminded members that the reporting requirement related to the WCPFC CMM was established not only to report fishing catch and effort but to track compliance and allow members to identify any difficulties in implementing the management measures so that these could be addressed as needed.

Agenda Item 5. Review of Conservation and Management Measures for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

14. Japan presented a proposal to amend CMM 2020-02 for Pacific Bluefin Tuna.

15. The United States presented a proposal for the establishment of Harvest Control Rules for the second rebuilding period.

16. The JWG discussed possible amendments to CMM 2020-02 for Pacific Bluefin Tuna and C-20-02 Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and agreed upon the package of amendments outlined in **Annex C**. JWG recommends the adoption of those amendments by the Northern Committee and the IATTC, respectively.

17. Regarding the provision on the transfer of small fish to large fish quotas in **Annex C**, the JWG agreed that up to 10% of small fish catch limit per CCM could be transferred using the conversion factor of 0.68 (25% in the case of parties who do not have a Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) large fish catch limit), and that the rest of the small fish catch limit could be transferred at a ratio of 1:1. The JWG agreed that the use of the 0.68 conversion factor should be allowed for three years (i.e. 2022-2024) and then reviewed.

18. The JWG agreed that the provision on 0% increase in catch for small fish in **Annex C** applies to the WCPO only.

19. The JWG discussed draft Harvest Control Rules for the second rebuilding period to be incorporated in HS 2017-02 for Pacific Bluefin Tuna Fisheries and C-18-02 on a Long-Term Management Framework for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean as outlined in **Annex D** and recommends their adoption by the Northern Committee and the IATTC, respectively.

20. Chinese Taipei noted the importance of maintaining 2002-2004 baseline year in the measure, and proposed a WCPO limits table to be discussed in the NC17 meeting, with an aim to include it in the measure.

Agenda Item 6. Future (2022) JWG meeting

21. Japan offered to host the next JWG meeting at a date to be determined to precede both NC and IATTC meetings, subject to the state of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agenda Item 7. Other business

7.1 Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic

22. The JWG discussed the ongoing MSE work and noted that progress has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

23. The JWG noted the ISC's advice on the PBF MSE as outlined in JWG06-WP-02. The JWG noted that Japan has provided a specialist for the development of the MSE work for the WCPO and encouraged interested parties to provide a specialist for the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). The JWG also encouraged interested parties to organize stakeholder workshops for the EPO and the WCPO respectively, in advance of the next JWG meeting, to facilitate further discussion by the JWG of management inputs for the MSE, in particular, operational management objectives and the anticipated management framework (e.g., how to balance the eastern and western Pacific fisheries).

24. The United States recognized the importance of stakeholder input but expressed some concern about the efficacy of the past stakeholder workshops. It suggested that, if it is not possible to hold JWG stakeholder workshops in 2022, members should be encouraged to hold their own domestic workshops prior to the JWG meeting to gather stakeholder input to enhance the JWG discussion of management objectives and other inputs at next year's meeting. The United States noted the importance of the JWG providing guidance to the ISC on management objectives and performance metrics in order to further develop the harvest strategy for long-term management.

25. Japan reported that Mr. Shingo Ota (Japan) will continue to chair the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) Working Group and intends to hold a meeting of the CDS Working Group in conjunction with the next JWG meeting. Japan also pointed out that the scope of the electronic CDS system e.g., a consolidated system to cover all tunas, one for Pacific bluefin tuna, etc. remains a fundamental issue that the Commission must give advice on.

26. The JWG encouraged Japan to begin preparations with interested parties towards holding next year's meeting of the CDS Working Group.

7.2 Other

27. The JWG noted the progress being made on close-kin recapture analysis and encouraged members to continue to develop this work.

28. The US proposed requests to the ISC (**Annex E**). JWG had no time to discuss them but requested the concerned parties including the US and Japan to develop the proposal and agreed to finalize it through proper process in both the NC and IATTC before the ISC starts the next assessment works for PBF tuna.

Agenda Item 8. Adoption of Report

29. [The IATTC-NC JWG06 adopted the report.]

Agenda Item 9. Close of meeting

30. [The meeting was brought to a close on 29 July 2021.]

ANNEXES

Annex A – List of participants

Annex B – Agenda

Annex C – Proposed amendments to CMM 2020-02 for Pacific Bluefin Tuna and C-20-02 Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean

Annex D – Proposed Harvest Control Rules for the Second Pacific Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Period

Annex E – USA Proposal on “Joint Working Group Recommendations on Requests to the ISC”

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MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA
SIXTH SESSION**

ELECTRONIC MEETING
8am-11am, Japan Standard Time
27-29 July 2021

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**JOINT IATTC AND WCPFC-NC WORKING GROUP MEETING ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA
SIXTH SESSION**

ELECTRONIC MEETING
8am-11am, Japan Standard Time
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AGENDA

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Adoption of Agenda and Meeting Procedures**
- 3. Scientific Information on Pacific Bluefin Tuna**
 - 3.1 Updates on the stock status of Pacific bluefin tuna
 - 3.2 Reports from WCPFC-Scientific Committee (SC) and IATTC-Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)
- 4. Reports on the implementation of conservation and management measures (CMMs) and resolutions for Pacific bluefin tuna**
- 5. Review of Conservation and Management Measures for Pacific Bluefin Tuna**
- 6. Future (2022) JWG meeting**
- 7. Other business**
 - 7.1 Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic
 - 7.2 Other
- 8. Adoption of Report**
- 9. Close of meeting**

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**Proposed amendments to CMM 2020-02 for Pacific Bluefin Tuna and C-20-02 Measures for the
Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean**

Potential Package

- Catch increases
 - 15% increase for WCPO large fish; 0% increase for small fish
 - Additional 30 mt of WCPO large fish for parties who do not have a large fish catch limit
 - 15% increase for EPO
 - Additional 200 mt increase for EPO
- JWG would agree to recommend these increases in each area but the new catch level for each CCM with PBF fisheries would be represented in a table that is agreed to in NC (Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei) and IATTC (Mexico and USA), respectively.
- In the WCPO: the transfer of small fish to large fish quotas allowed, with up to 10%^{1*} of small fish catch limit per CCM using the conversion factor of 0.68.
- In the WCPO: a 17% carryover in three years (2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024).
- In the EPO: the same carry forward framework will be used in the biennial cycle that has been the typical format of the IATTC measure through 2024. This will result in an amendment to the current measure that adds 3 years (2022-2024) onto the current measure. As such, the resolution would contain two biennial cycles within a single resolution (i.e., 2021-2022 and 2023-2024).

¹ Notwithstanding this provision, parties who do not have a WCPO large fish catch limit may apply 25% instead of 10%.

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Proposed Harvest Control Rules for the Second Pacific Bluefin Tuna Rebuilding Period

The harvest control rules during the second rebuilding period below will be applied based on the results of stock assessments and SSB projections to be conducted by ISC.

With respect to objective 1 of this harvest strategy:

If the SSB projection indicates that the probability of achieving the second rebuilding target by 2034 or 10 years after reaching the initial rebuilding target, whichever is earlier, is less than 60%, management measures shall be modified to increase it to at least 60%. For this purpose, the ISC will be requested, if necessary, to provide information on possible management measures to achieve 60% probability.

If the SSB projection indicates that the probability of achieving the second rebuilding target by 2034, or 10 years after reaching the initial rebuilding target, whichever is earlier, is at 75% or larger, fishery controls may be changed, including adjustment of catch limits, as long as the probability is maintained at 70% or larger. For this purpose, ISC will be requested, if necessary, to provide relevant information on potential fishery controls.

With respect to objectives 2 and 3 of this harvest strategy:

Any adjustments to management measures shall be considered in cooperation between the two RFMOs taking into account historical and future projected proportional fishery impacts on SSB between fisheries in the EPO and fisheries in the WCPO. For this purpose, ISC will be requested, if necessary, to provide relevant information, including projected proportional fishery impact of potential management measures changes.

This harvest control rule will be reviewed and modified, as necessary, if depletion estimates across the time-series have been adjusted due to changes in assumptions and/or settings of the stock assessment model.

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**USA Proposal on
“Joint Working Group Recommendations on Requests to the ISC”²**

1. The Joint Working Group recommends the Northern Committee (NC) request the ISC perform projections of catch increases agreed to at this 6th Meeting of the Joint Working Group and provide the relative fishery impact of WCPO fisheries and EPO fisheries on SSB over the projection period. Additionally, the Joint Working Group requests the ISC provide at least one scenario (with projection) of effort and catch limits for EPO and WCPO that would satisfy the rebuilding objective and by 2031 achieve a relative (or proportional) fishery impact on SSB of approximately 75% from WCPO fisheries and 25% from EPO fisheries.
2. The JWG recommends that the NC emphasize to the ISC the standing request in the current harvest strategy that “[t]he ISC...periodically evaluate whether the recruitment scenario used during the second rebuilding period is reasonable given current conditions, and to make recommendations on whether a different recruitment scenario should be used.” In 2022 and with each benchmark or update stock assessment thereafter, the ISC should conduct sensitivity analyses using alternative recruitment scenarios and advise whether the long-term average recruitment scenario represents the most likely future recruitments. If the ISC recommends alternative recruitment scenarios, then they should be included as projection runs in the benchmark or update stock assessment.
3. The JWG recommends that the NC request the ISC analyze in the projections the impacts of a transfer of 10% mt of small fish limit to large fish limit using a conversion factor of 0.68:1 small:large.

² The JWG did not have time to discuss this US proposal but requested that concerned parties including US and Japan consider these and other requests and finalize a list of requests to the ISC through the proper process in both the NC and the IATTC before the ISC starts the next assessment work for Pacific bluefin tuna.