

**NORTHERN COMMITTEE**

**THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**

Busan, Republic of Korea

28 August – 1 September 2017

**Interim Harvest Strategy for North Pacific Albacore Fishery**

**WCPFC-NC13-2017/DP-13 (Rev.01)**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and CANADA**

**Proposal by the United States of America and Canada**

**to the**

**Thirteenth Regular Session of the Northern Committee**

**Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean**

The United States and Canada propose that the Northern Committee forward the following recommendations to the Commission at its 14th Regular Session.

The Northern Committee recommends that the Commission adopt the attached revision to the title of previously adopted precautionary management framework for North Pacific albacore, so that it may be recognized as a harvest strategy. In addition, the Northern Committee recommends that the Commission direct the Secretariat to make this harvest strategy available, as a stand-alone harvest strategy document, on a web page dedicated to this and other harvest strategies, including interim harvest strategies, agreed to by the Commission.

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| **INTERIM HARVEST STRATEGY FOR**  **NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE FISHERY** |

Based on the recommendation of the Northern Committee at its 10th regular session, this harvest strategy was adopted by the Commission at its 11th regular session as a “precautionary management framework for NP albacore”.

**1. Management objective**

The management objective for the North Pacific albacore fishery is to maintain the biomass, with reasonable variability, around its current level in order to allow recent exploitation levels to continue and with a low risk of breaching the limit reference point.

**2. Biological reference points**

Based on ISC’s 2014 stock assessment advice and following the hierarchical approach adopted by the Commission, North Pacific albacore is to be treated as a Level 2 stock. The following is based on an average recruitment scenario:

* The limit reference point (LRP) for this stock is established at 20%SSBcurrent F=0.

This LRP is consistent with the Annex II of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and recent WCPFC decisions on LRPs for the three tropical tuna species and South Pacific albacore, where 20%SSBcurrent F=0 was adopted. If this point is breached, management actions will be taken to return the stock to a predetermined level as outlined in the subsequent section on Decision Rules.

* The target reference point (TRP) for this stock will be determined following a comprehensive analysis under a management strategy evaluation (MSE) approach as outlined in section 4 on “Future Work”. Historical fishing activity, anticipated fishing activity, and the source of increased fishing mortality will also be considered when evaluating a suitable TRP. Socioeconomic factors, as per UNFSA Article 6.3.c., will be further considered. The existing conservation and management measure (CMM) for the stock (WCPFC 2005-03) establishes through limits on current effort an overall management regime for the stock.

**3. Decision rules**

NC recommends a management strategy for the stock that ensures that the risk of the biomass decreasing below the LRP is low.

LRP rule: In the event that, based on information from ISC, the spawning stock size decreases below the LRP at any time, NC will, at its next regular session or intersessionally if warranted, adopt a reasonable timeline, but no longer than 10 years, for rebuilding the spawning stock to at least the LRP and recommend a CMM that can be expected to achieve such rebuilding within that timeline. NC will take into account historical fishing activity and the source of increased fishing mortality when developing management strategies to rebuild the stock, including in establishing effort reductions. NC will further consider socioeconomic factors, as per UNFSA Article 6.3.c., as well as which NC members, if any, contributed to exceeding the LRP.

**4. Future work**

This framework may be periodically reviewed and revised. To support such revisions, NC endorses the ongoing development and implementation of an MSE for the stock and fishery, which would yield new information that would enhance the robustness of this framework.