



FIRST SOUTH PACIFIC ALBACORE ALLOCATION WORKSHOP

25 – 26 June 2026

Wellington, New Zealand (Hybrid)

Delegation Paper from the United States of America to the First South Pacific Albacore Allocation Workshop

WCPFC-SPAA01-2026-DP01

25 May 2026

Submitted by the United States of America

Introduction

The U.S. is submitting this paper to support the goals of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), especially those focused on keeping highly migratory fish stocks healthy and recognizing the specific needs of developing States such as American Samoa, as detailed in Article 5 and Article 25. The U.S. delegation has consistently emphasized at WCPFC20, WCPFC21, and WCPFC22 that a Management Procedure (MP) for South Pacific Albacore (SPA) must be paired with an implementing measure that is durable, enforceable, and equitable. This is essential to achieve a sustainable future for the WCPFC SPA fishery. The initial U.S. positions detailed in this paper do not cover all U.S. positions on the implementing measure. These initial positions are designed to work alongside other implementing elements to uphold the integrity of the Commission's conservation standards while recognizing the unique nature of the fishery and the developmental aspirations of American Samoa and continued economic opportunity for the small-scale U.S. troll fleet targeting SPA.

At this stage, the U.S. presents WCPFC members with four key pillars, a framework consistently advanced across recent Commission meetings: First, a **Domestic Utilization Requirement**, consistent with Article 25(1)(b) of the Convention, to ensure local development benefits. Second, **Enhanced Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) Requirements**, including an **Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Compliance Lever** to reward stewardship, reflecting ongoing U.S. efforts on WCPFC compliance reforms. Third, a **Graduated Implementation Schedule** to provide operational certainty and mitigate economic disruption. Finally, the United States emphasizes that this framework is a **species-specific and region-specific solution** that does not establish a precedent for the allocation of other highly migratory stocks, such as tropical tunas, within the Convention Area.

1. Domestic Utilization Requirement

To ensure that EEZ allocations generate genuine Pacific Island development benefits rather than serving as pass-throughs for foreign fleet revenue, the U.S. proposes a **Domestic Utilization Requirement**. This provision requires that a specified percentage of each Coastal State's EEZ allocation be caught by domestically-flagged vessels or under domestic-ownership joint venture arrangements. This is

consistent with the aspirations of the American Samoa fleet and rewards genuine investment in local capacity.

Draft Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) Paragraph on domestic utilization:

Coastal State CCMs that receive an allocation pursuant to this CMM shall ensure that no less than [X]% of the allocation assigned to their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is harvested by domestically-flagged vessels or vessels operating under bona fide domestic-ownership joint venture arrangements, consistent with Article 25(1)(b) of the Convention.

2. Enhanced Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) Requirements

The effectiveness of any allocation framework depends upon robust enforcement. The United States proposes that all South Pacific Albacore (SPA) **must be landed directly in port by the fishing vessel that caught the SPA or transshipped exclusively within an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).** By effectively banning high seas transshipment, the Commission can significantly enhance MCS and reduce the risk of unauthorized activity.

Draft CMM Paragraph on transshipment:

To enhance monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) for South Pacific Albacore, all transshipment of SPA must be conducted exclusively within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of a Coastal State CCM, or the entire catch must be landed directly in port by the fishing vessel that caught the SPA. Transshipment of South Pacific Albacore on the high seas of the Convention Area is prohibited.

3. Graduated Implementation Schedule

The United States recognizes that an immediate step-change reduction in total catch would impose severe short-term economic disruption on fleets operating under current vessel and trip plans. A phased implementation schedule is essential to provide operational certainty for all CCMs, thereby increasing the probability of consensus adoption. The U.S. proposes a three-year phase-in schedule that gradually transitions from recent catch levels to the final MP-determined TAC for the first MP cycle, only.

Draft CMM Paragraph for Graduated Implementation:

To mitigate short-term economic disruption, the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) determined by the Management Procedure shall be phased in over three years, beginning in 2027: (a) Year 1 (2027) catch shall not exceed 62,000 mt; (b) Year 2 (2028) catch shall not exceed 59,000 mt; and (c) Year 3 (2029) and beyond shall apply the full MP-determined TAC output.

4. Species-Specific Allocation Principle

The criteria utilized to address the South Pacific Albacore allocation—which correctly emphasize the **special requirements of developing States, particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Participating Territories**, and the **proximity of Coastal States to the resource**—must be understood as a response to the unique distributional characteristics of the SPA stock. These criteria are distinct and **cannot be copied and pasted** into the tropical Bigeye Management Procedure (MP) or other high-seas focused negotiations. Applying the SPA criteria to tropical tuna stocks would **prejudice the rights of Flag States in the high seas** and undermine the principle of non-discriminatory application of CMMs. As a

result, the United States views the south Pacific albacore framework as a **species-specific and region-specific solution** that does not create a precedent for the allocation of highly migratory stocks across the Convention Area, ensuring the integrity of the Bigeye MP remains protected by principles of **established historical activity** and **flag-state equity**.

Draft CMM Paragraph on Species-Specific Allocation Principle:

The Commission affirms that the criteria and mechanisms adopted for the allocation of South Pacific Albacore are species-specific and tailored to the unique distributional characteristics and developmental objectives of this fishery. The adoption and application of this CMM shall not be construed as establishing a precedent for the allocation of other highly migratory stocks, particularly tropical tunas, within the Convention Area, in accordance with the principle of non-prejudice to the rights, jurisdiction, and duties of CCMs under the Convention.

Conclusion

The United States shares this proposal as an early foundation for a constructive and collaborative dialogue. The United States reserves its final agreement until it is able to undertake a comprehensive and situational assessment of every component of the framework being considered by the Commission. Ultimately, the United States seeks to facilitate consensus among all members, and it is committed to achieving a balanced, durable outcome for the South Pacific Albacore fishery. We sincerely seek the candid feedback of all Members on these four pillars and welcome further detailed discussion on all aspects of the implementing measure for the South Pacific Albacore Management Procedure. We are ready to work together to harmonize views and finalize a measure that serves the interests of the entire Commission.