



**COMMISSION**  
**THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION**  
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**CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE TO ESTABLISH  
A MULTI-ANNUAL REBUILDING PLAN FOR PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA**

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**Conservation and Management Measure 2016-04**

*The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):*

*Recognizing that* WCPFC6 adopted Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific bluefin tuna (CMM 2009-07) and the measure was revised five times since then (CMM 2010-04, CMM 2012-06, CMM 2013-09, CMM 2014-04 and CMM 2015-04) based on the conservation advice from the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) on this stock;

*Noting with concern* the latest stock assessment provided by ISC Plenary Meeting in July 2016, indicating the following:

- (1) SSB fluctuated throughout the assessment period (1952–2014), (2) SSB steadily declined from 1996 to 2010, and (3) the decline appears to have ceased since 2010, although the stock remains near the historic low (2.6% of unfished SSB);
- The 2014 estimated recruitment was relatively low, and the average recruitment for the last five years may have been below the historical average;
- The fishery exploitation rate in 2011-2013 exceeded all biological reference points evaluated by the ISC except  $F_{MED}$  and  $F_{LOSS}$ .
- Since the early 1990s, the WCPO purse seine fisheries, in particular those targeting small fish (age 0-1) have had an increasing impact on the spawning stock biomass, and in 2014 had a greater impact than any other fishery group.
- The projection results indicate that: (1) the probability of SSB recovering to the initial rebuilding target ( $SSB_{MED1952-2014}$ ) by 2024 is 69% or above the level prescribed in the WCPFC CMM 2015-04 if low recruitment scenario is assumed and WCPFC CMM 2015-04 and IATTC Resolution C-14-06 continue in force and are fully implemented; and (2) a 10% reduction in the catch limit for fish smaller than 30 kg would have a larger effect on recovery than a 10% reduction in the catch limit for fish larger than 30 kg; and

- Catching a high number of smaller juvenile fish can have a greater impact on future spawning stock biomass than catching the same weight of larger fish;
- ISC recommends defining SSBMED as the median point estimate for a fixed period of time, either, 1952-2012 or 1952-2014, and further stated that SSBMED is estimated to be 41,069 t for the period of 1952-2012 and 40,994 t for 1952-2014.

*Recognizing the requirement to adopt* reference points for conservation and management of Pacific bluefin tuna; and

*Further recalling* that paragraph (4), Article 22 of the WCPFC Convention, which requires cooperation between the Commission and the IATTC to reach agreement to harmonize CMMs for fish stocks such as Pacific bluefin tuna that occur in the convention areas of both organizations;

*Adopts*, in accordance with Article 10 of the WCPFC Convention that:

### **General Provision**

1. The Commission Members, Cooperating Non-Members and participating Territories (hereinafter referred to as CCMs) recognize that the management objectives of the WCPFC are to maintain or restore fish stocks at levels capable of producing MSY and shall implement a provisional Multi-Annual Rebuilding Plan for Pacific bluefin tuna to rebuild the stock by adopting and achieving step-wise rebuilding targets.. This stepwise rebuilding approach will be as follows:

- a. Starting in 2015, CCMs agree to rebuild the stock with the initial goal of rebuilding the SSB to the historical median (the median point estimate for 1952-2014) within 10 years with at least 60% probability.
- b. Implementation and progress of this plan shall be reviewed based on the results of stock assessments and SSB projections to be conducted by ISC in 2018 and every two years thereafter. For this purpose, the ISC is requested to update the SSB projections for the harvest scenarios previously recommended by the WCPFC, along with any additional scenarios recommended by the Northern Committee. This CMM shall be amended if necessary upon such review.
- c. In 2017, CMMs shall agree on a second rebuilding target, to be reached by 2030 (not necessarily the ultimate rebuilding target).
- d. CMMs shall revise or adopt conservation and management measures to achieve the second rebuilding target that would become effective after the initial goal is met.

2. The Northern Committee shall consider and develop reference points and harvest control rules for the long-term management of Pacific bluefin tuna at its meeting in 2017.

### **Management measures**

3. CCMs shall take measures necessary to ensure that:

(1) Total fishing effort by their vessel fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna in the area north of the 20° N shall stay below the 2002–2004 annual average levels.

(2) All catches of Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30 kg shall be reduced to 50% of the 2002–2004 annual average levels. Any overage of the catch limit shall be deducted from the catch limit for the following year.

4. CCMs shall take measures necessary to ensure that all catches of Pacific Bluefin tuna 30kg or larger shall not be increased from the 2002-2004 annual average levels<sup>1</sup>. Any overage of the catch limit shall be deducted from the catch limit for the following year. However, in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 CCMs may use part of the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30 kg stipulated in paragraph 3 (2) above to catch Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger in the same year. In this case, the amount of catch 30 kg or larger shall be counted against the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30 kg. CCMs shall not use the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger to catch Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30 kg. The ISC is requested to review the implications of this special provision in terms of PBF mortality and stock rebuilding probabilities in 2020. Based on that review, in 2020 the Northern Committee will determine whether it should be continued past 2020, and if so, recommend changes to the CMM as appropriate.

5. An emergency rule shall be considered in 2017 which stipulates specific rules all CCMs shall comply with when drastic drops in recruitment are detected.

6. CCMs shall report their 2002–2004 baseline fishing effort and <30 kg and >=30 kg catch levels for 2013 and 2014, by fishery, as referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4, to the Executive Director by 31 July 2015. CCMs shall also report to the Executive Director by 31 July each year their fishing effort and <30 kg and >=30 kg catch levels, by fishery, for the previous 3 year, accounting for all catches, including discards. The Executive Director will compile this information each year into an appropriate format for the use of the Northern Committee.

7. CCMs shall intensify cooperation for effective implementation of this CMM, including juvenile catch reduction.

8. CCMs, in particular those catching juvenile Pacific bluefin tuna, shall take measures to monitor and obtain prompt results of recruitment of juveniles each year.

9. Consistent with their rights and obligations under international law, and in accordance with domestic laws and regulations, CCMs shall, to the extent possible, take measures necessary to prevent commercial transaction of Pacific bluefin tuna and its products that undermine the effectiveness of this CMM, especially measures prescribed in the paragraph 3 and 4 above. CCMs shall cooperate for this purpose.

10. CCMs shall cooperate to establish a catch documentation scheme (CDS) to be applied to Pacific bluefin tuna as a matter of priority.

11. CCMs shall also take measures necessary to strengthen monitoring and data collecting system for Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries and farming in order to improve the data quality and

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<sup>1</sup> This may apply to Japan starting from July 1, 2017

timeliness of all the data reporting;

12. CCMs shall report to Executive Director by 31 July annually measures they used to implement paragraphs 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 14 of this CMM. CCMs shall also monitor the international trade of the products derived from Pacific bluefin tuna and report the results to Executive Director by 31 July annually. The Northern Committee shall annually review those reports CCMs submit pursuant to this paragraph and if necessary, advise a CCM to take an action for enhancing its compliance with this CMM.

13. The WCPFC Executive Director shall communicate this Conservation Management Measure to the IATTC Secretariat and its contracting parties whose fishing vessels engage in fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna and request them to take equivalent measures in conformity with this CMM.

14. To enhance effectiveness of this measure, CCMs are encouraged to communicate with and, if appropriate, work with the concerned IATTC contracting parties bilaterally.

15. The provisions of paragraphs 3 and 4 shall not prejudice the legitimate rights and obligations under international law of those small island developing State Members and participating territories in the Convention Area whose current fishing activity for Pacific bluefin tuna is limited, but that have a real interest in fishing for the species, that may wish to develop their own fisheries for Pacific bluefin tuna in the future.

16. The provisions of paragraph 15 shall not provide a basis for an increase in fishing effort by fishing vessels owned or operated by interests outside such developing coastal State, particularly Small Island Developing State Members or participating territories, unless such fishing is conducted in support of efforts by such Members and territories to develop their own domestic fisheries.

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