NORTHERN COMMITTEE
SIXTEENTH REGULAR SESSION

ECECTRONIC MEETING
8 October 2020

Proposed amendment to the current CMM 2019-02 for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

WCPFC-NC16-2020/DP-11

Explanatory note

1. In accordance with paragraph 5 (b) of the Harvest Strategy for Pacific Bluefin Tuna Fisheries (Harvest Strategy 2017-02) and based on information from ISC, Japan submits a proposal to amend the current CMM 2019-02 for PBF to increase the catch limits.
2. Our specific proposal on increases to the catch limits is as follows:
   - Both of catch limits for PBF less than 30kg and those for PBF 30kg or larger are increased by 20% in accordance with the Scenario # 6 presented in the ISC report[1]; and,
   - Based on the overall catch limits, a catch limit for each relevant CCM is specified in the CMM for PBF less than 30kg and PBF 30kg or larger, respectively, which will be discussed at the NC16 (new paragraph 3).
3. In addition to increases to the catch limits, a conversion factor to use the catch limit for PBF smaller than 30kg to catch PBF 30kg or larger is newly introduced (new paragraph 6). The catch of age 2 PBF, the largest cohort in PBF smaller than 30kg, is estimated to have 1.46 times (1.9/1.3 = 1.46) larger impact on biomass than that of age 3 PBF, the smallest cohort in PBF 30kg or larger[2]. If the impact of the catch of age 0 PBF is compared with that of age 3 PBF, a proportion would be larger than 1.46. Based on these scientific evidences, a conversion factor of 0.68 (= 1/1.46), as the most conservative figure, is applied in counting the actual catch of PBF 30kg or larger against the catch limit for PBF smaller than 30kg.

CMM 2013-06 Criteria

In accordance with CMM2013-06 (Conservation and Management Measure on the criteria for the consideration of Conservation and Management proposals), the following assessment has been undertaken.

a. Who is required to implement the proposal?

The current CMM (CMM 2019-02) are addressed to all CCMs to implement it, although Pacific bluefin tuna catches reported by SIDS CCMs are very small according to the report by the Secretariat (WCPFC16-2019-

[1] Table S-4 of "Stock Assessment of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Pacific Ocean in 2020" (SC16-SA-WP-06)
[2] Table 1 of "REPORT OF THE PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA WORKING GROUP INTERSESSIONAL WORKSHOP"

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA

Conservation and Management Measure 2020-XX~~2019-02~~

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 ~~eight~~nine times since then (CMM 2010- 04, CMM 2012-06, CMM 2013-09, CMM 2014-04, CMM 2015-04, CMM 2016-04, CMM2017-08, ~~and~~ CMM 2018-02 and CMM 2019-02) 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 20~~18~~20, indicating the following:

- ~~(1) SSB fluctuated throughout the assessment period (1952–2016), (2) SSB steadily declined from 1996 to 2010, and (3) the slow increase of the stock continues since 2011 including the most recent two years (2015-2016)~~ (1) spawning stock biomass (SSB) fluctuated throughout the assessment period (fishing years 1952-2018), (2) the SSB steadily declined from 1996 to 2010, (3) the slow increase of the stock biomass continues since 2011, (4) total biomass in 2018 exceeded the historical median with an increase in immature fish; and (5) fishing mortality (F%SPR) declined from a level producing about 1% of SPR in 2004-2009 to a level producing 14% of SPR in 2016-2018;
- ~~The 2015 recruitment estimate is low and similar to estimates of previous years while the 2016 recruitment estimate is higher than the historical average, and the uncertainty of the 2016 recruitment estimate is higher than in previous years because it occurs in the terminal year of the assessment model and is mainly informed by one observation from troll age-0 CPUE index~~Historical recruitment estimates have fluctuated since 1952 without an apparent trend. The 2015 recruitment estimate is lower than the historical average while the 2016 recruitment estimate (about 17 million fish) is higher than the historical average. The recruitment estimates for 2017 and 2018, which are based on fewer observations and more uncertain, are below the historical average;
- ~~The fishery exploitation rate in 2015-2016 exceeded all biological reference points evaluated by the ISC except FMED and FLOS~~. A substantial decrease in estimated F is observed in ages 0-2 in 2016-2018 relative to the previous years.
- Since about the early 1990s, the W~~C~~PO purse seine fisher~~ies~~y group~~, in particular those~~ targeting small fish (age 0-1) ha~~ves~~s had a~~n increasing~~greater impact ~~on the spawning stock biomass~~, and the effect of this group in 201~~6~~8 ~~had a~~was greater ~~impact~~ than any of the other fishery group~~s.~~;
- 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 mature fish;
- The projection results indicate that~~: the current management measures by the WCPFC~~

~~(CMM 2018-02) and IATTC Resolution (C-18-01) under the low recruitment scenario resulted in an estimated 97% probability of achieving the initial biomass rebuilding target (6.7% of SSBF=0) by 2024~~, under all examined scenarios, the initial goal of WCPFC and IATTC, rebuilding to SSB_{MED} by 2024 with at least 60% probability, is reached with 99% or 100% probability, and that the risk of SSB falling below SSB_{loss} at least once in 10 years is negligible.;

- The projection results also indicate that, under all examined scenarios, ~~T~~the estimated probability of achieving the second biomass rebuilding target (20% of SSBF=0) 10 years after the achievement of the initial rebuilding target or by 2034, whichever is earlier, is greater than 9~~6~~0%; 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;~~

Noting, however, that the probabilities shown in the projection indicate that reduction of juveniles would have less positive impact than those shown in the 2018 projections in terms of achieving the rebuilding targets;

~~in its response to requests from IATTC-WCPFC NC Joint Working Group, ISC Plenary Meeting in July 2019:~~

- ~~Noted that the Japanese troll recruitment index value estimated for 2017 is similar to its historical average (1980-2017), that Japanese recruitment monitoring indices in 2017 and 2018 are higher than the 2016 value and that there is anecdotal evidence that larger fish are becoming more abundant in EPO, although this information needs to be confirmed for the next stock assessment expected in 2020;~~
- ~~Recommended maintaining the conservation advice from ISC in 2018; and,~~
- ~~Conducted projections of scenarios for catch increase in the same manner as in the 2018 assessment.~~

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 This conservation and management measure has been prepared to implement the Harvest Strategy for Pacific Bluefin Tuna Fisheries (Harvest Strategy 2017-02), and the Northern Committee shall periodically review and recommend revisions to this measure as needed to implement the Harvest Strategy.

Management measures

2 CCMs shall take measures necessary to ensure that~~:(1) T~~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.

3

~~(2)~~ Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei shall, respectively, take measures necessary to ensure that its~~All~~ catches of Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30 kg and Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger shall ~~be reduced to 50% of the 2002–2004 annual average levels~~ not exceed the following levels. ~~Any overage or underage of the catch limit shall be deducted from or may be added to the catch limit for the following year. The maximum underage that a CCM may carry over in any given year shall not exceed 5% of its annual initial catch limit.[1]~~

[Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30kg]

	2021
Japan	X metric ton
Korea	Y metric ton

[Pacific bluefin tuna 30kg or larger]

	2021
Japan	X metric ton
Korea	Y metric ton
Chinese Taipei	Z metric ton

4 CCMs, not described in paragraph 3, may increase its catch of Pacific bluefin tuna as long as it does not exceed 10 metric tons.

~~3~~5

~~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[2,3].~~Any overage or underage of the catch limit described in paragraph 3 shall be deducted from or may be added to the catch limit for the following year. The maximum underage that a CCM may carry over in any given year shall not exceed 5% of its annual initial catch limit[1].

~~5~~

6 ~~However, in 2018, 2019, and 2020~~ CCMs described in paragraph 3 may use part of the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30 kg stipulated in paragraph ~~2 (2)~~3 above to

[1] Notwithstanding paragraph ~~2 and 3~~5, a CCM may carry over up to 17% of its initial 20~~19~~20 catch limits, which remain uncaught, to 202~~0~~1.

~~[2] CCMs with a base line catch of 10 t or less may increase its catch as long as it does not exceed 10 t.~~

~~[3] 300 tons of the catch limit of Pacific bluefin tuna 30kg or larger of Chinese Taipei may be transferred to Japan in 2020, subject to a notification by Chinese Taipei to the Secretariat. This transfer may apply for 2020 only. Adoption of this transfer does not confer the allocation of a right, and does not prejudice any future decision of the Commission.~~

catch Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger in the same year. In this case, the catch amount adjusted with the conversion factor 0.68 ~~of~~ (actual catch 30 kg or larger x 0.68) 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, in its work referred to in Section 5 of Harvest Strategy, 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.~~

7 All CCMs except Japan shall implement the limits in paragraph ~~2 and~~ 3 on a calendar-year basis. Japan shall implement the limits using a management year other than the calendar year for some of its fisheries and have its implementation assessed with respect to its management year. To facilitate the assessment, Japan shall:

a. Use the following management years:
   1. For its fisheries licensed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, use the calendar year as the management year.
   2. For its other fisheries, use 1 April – 31 March as the management year[~~2~~4].

b. In its annual reports for PBF, for each category described in a.1 and a.2 above, complete the required reporting template for both the management year and calendar year clearly identifying fisheries for each management year.

8 CCMs shall 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.

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

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

11 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 ~~2 and~~ 3 above. CCMs shall cooperate for this purpose.

12 CCMs shall cooperate to establish a catch documentation scheme (CDS) to be applied to Pacific bluefin tuna in accordance with the Attachment of this CMM.

[~~2~~4] ~~2~~ For the category described a.2, the TCC shall assess in year 20XX its implementation during the management year that starts 1 April 20XX-1 (e.g., in the 2020 compliance review, the TCC will assess Japan's implementation for its fisheries licensed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries during calendar-year 2019 and for its other fisheries during 1 April 2019 through 31 March 2020).

13 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 timeliness of all the data reporting;

14 CCMs shall report to Executive Director by 31 July annually measures they used to implement paragraphs 2, 3, 4, ~~5,~~ 7, 8, 10, 11, ~~and~~ 13 and 16 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.

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

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

17 The provisions of paragraphs 2 ~~and~~ , 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.

18 The provisions of paragraph ~~14~~17 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.

19 This CMM replaces CMM 201~~8~~9-02~~.~~ and shall be replaced by a new CMM to be adopted in 2021, taking into consideration the outcomes of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group on Pacific bluefin tuna ~~On the basis of stock assessment conducted by ISC and reported to NC in 2020, and other pertinent information, this CMM shall be reviewed and may be amended as appropriate.~~

Attachment

Development of a Catch Document Scheme for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

Background

At the 1st joint working group meeting between NC and IATTC, held in Fukuoka, Japan from August 29 to September 1, 2016, participants supported to advance the work on the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) in the next joint working group meeting, in line with the development of overarching CDS framework by WCPFC and taking into account of the existing CDS by other RFMOs.

1. Objective of the Catch Document Scheme

The objective of CDS is to combat IUU fishing for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF) by providing a means of preventing PBF and its products identified as caught by or originating from IUU fishing activities from moving through the commodity chain and ultimately entering markets.

2. Use of electronic scheme

Whether CDS will be a paper based scheme, an electronic scheme or a gradual transition from a paper based one to an electronic one should be first decided since the requirement of each scheme would be quite different.

3. Basic elements to be included in the draft conservation and management measure (CMM)

It is considered that at least the following elements should be considered in drafting CMM.

(1) Objective
(2) General provision
(3) Definition of terms
(4) Validation authorities and validating process of catch documents and re-export certificates
(5) Verification authorities and verifying process for import and re-import
(6) How to handle PBF caught by artisanal fisheries
(7) How to handle PBF caught by recreational or sport fisheries
(8) Use of tagging as a condition for exemption of validation
(9) Communication between exporting members and importing members
(10) Communication between members and the Secretariat
(11) Role of the Secretariat
(12) Relationship with non-members
(13) Relationship with other CDSs and similar programs
(14) Consideration to developing members
(15) Schedule for introduction
(16) Attachment
    (i) Catch document forms
    (ii) Re-export certificate forms
    (iii) Instruction sheets for how to fill out forms
    (iv) List of data to be extracted and compiled by the Secretariat

4. Work plan

The following schedule may need to be modified, depending on the progress on the WCPFC CDS for tropical tunas.

2017	The joint working group will submit this concept paper to the NC and IATTC for endorsement. NC will send the WCPFC annual meeting the recommendation to endorse the paper.
2018	The joint working group will hold a technical meeting, preferably around its meeting, to materialize the concept paper into a draft CMM. The joint working group will report the progress to the WCPFC via NC and the IATTC, respectively.
2019	The joint working group will hold a second technical meeting to improve the draft CMM. The joint working group will report the progress to the WCPFC via NC and the IATTC, respectively.
20XX ~~2020~~	The joint working group will hold a third technical meeting to finalize the draft CMM. Once it is finalized, the joint working group will submit it to the NC and the IATTC for adoption. The NC will send the WCPFC the recommendation to adopt it.

IP10). For possible extension of fisheries for SIDS in the future, the current CMM states in its paragraph 14 that "The provisions of paragraph 2 and 3 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". Japan's proposal does not change the above-mentioned nature of the current CMM, as is provided in the new paragraph 16 of the proposal.

b. Which CCMs would this proposal impact and in what way(s) and what proportion?
c. Are there linkages with other proposals or instruments in other regional fisheries management organizations or international organizations that reduce the burden of implementation?
d. Does the proposal affect development opportunities for SIDS?
e. Does the proposal affect SIDS domestic access to resources and development aspirations?
f. What resources, including financial and human capacity, are needed by SIDS to implement the proposal?
g. What mitigation measures are included in the proposal?
h. What assistance mechanisms and associated timeframe, including training and financial support, are included in the proposal to avoid a disproportionate burden on SIDS?

As described in a. above, Japan's proposal does not impact fisheries by SIDS, so no special consideration for SIDS is required.