



**DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW WCPFC TROPICAL TUNA MEASURE
WORKSHOP 1 (TTMW1)
Electronic Meeting
26-30 April 2021**

STATEMENT TO TTMW1

**WCPFC-TTMW1-2021-OP01
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Submitted by The PEW Charitable Trusts

Statement to the 1st Workshop on the Development of a New Tropical Tuna Measure April 26-30, 2021, online

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes the opportunity to participate as an observer at the first workshop on the development of a new tropical tuna Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. We appreciate the work of the Chair, Members, and Secretariat to convene this workshop to discuss initial aspects of the new measure. We support the focus on management objectives, which should set the vision for the measure and be the metric to judge its success. As such, we urge members to:

Continue existing management objectives for bigeye and yellowfin tunas and ensure skipjack is managed to avoid a decline in biomass, until harvest strategies can be adopted. WCPFC should agree to, at a minimum, maintain existing¹ objectives for bigeye and yellowfin. With the three tropical tuna stocks in the green, WCPFC should continue to maintain a buffer that minimizes the risk of breaching the Limit Reference Point and guards against uncertainties, such as unforeseen changes in environmental conditions or the incorporation of new knowledge that changes the perception of stock status. We recognize other objectives relating to greater levels of biomass have been analysed by the scientific services provider. However, given the difficulties of a virtual meeting, it is critical for WCPFC to reach agreement and move forward with the harvest strategy development process, which should test a full suite of objectives against a greater range of uncertainties through Management Strategy Evaluation.

Strengthen the measure's commitment to act as a bridge to the adoption of harvest strategies by including language that sets specific timelines for adoption. The measure should continue to serve as a "bridge to the adoption of a harvest strategy for bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin tuna stocks and/or fisheries," (Para 11, CMM 2020-01). Yet, this objective was first agreed in December 2017, and measurable progress since has been slow. WCPFC should strengthen that commitment by embedding timelines for adoption of harvest strategies in the measure.

Require 100 percent longline observer coverage to collect information on fishing activity and compliance with the measure. The current tropical tuna measure includes a requirement for 100 percent observer coverage on purse seine vessels, yet longline vessels are still only required to achieve a coverage level of 5 percent. The new measure should increase the required level of longline observer coverage to match that of the purse seine fishery via the use of human observers and/or electronic monitoring. This would increase the data available for science, allow the Commission to verify the activities of all longline fleets, and detect instances of non-compliance with the measure.

¹ Pending agreement on a target reference point, the spawning biomass depletion ratio ($SB/SB_{F=0}$) for bigeye and yellowfin is to be maintained at or above the average $SB/SB_{F=0}$ for 2012-2015.