



**NORTHERN COMMITTEE
TWELFTH REGULAR SESSION**
Fukuoka, Japan
29 August – 2 September 2016

Precautionary Management Framework for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

WCPFC-NC12-2016/DP-13

UNITES STATES OF AMERICA

PRECAUTIONARY MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA

Proposal by the United States of America to the Twelfth Regular Session of the Northern Committee

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

Introduction and scope

This precautionary management framework has been prepared in accordance with the Commission's Conservation and Management Measure on Establishing a Harvest Strategy for Key Fisheries and Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, and is a "harvest strategy" in that context.

This framework applies to the stock(s) of Pacific bluefin tuna within the Convention Area and associated fisheries. The Northern Committee may determine the boundaries of such stock(s) for the purpose of applying this management framework and recommending conservation and management measures. Although the provisions of this framework are expressed in terms of a single stock, they may be applied to multiple stocks as appropriate and as determined by the Northern Committee.

1. Management objectives

The management objective is to support thriving Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries across the Pacific Ocean while maintaining the stock at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield.

2. Reference points

Because steepness in the stock-recruitment relationship is not well known but the key biological and fishery variables are reasonably well estimated,¹ the stock is to be treated as a Level 2 stock under the Commission's hierarchical approach for setting biological limit reference points.

- The limit reference point for the stock size (B-limit) is $15\%SSB_{\text{current},F=0}$ ²
- The Northern Committee will develop more refined management objectives, conduct any necessary further analysis, and specify a target reference point for the stock size (B-target) and/or the exploitation rate (F-target).

¹ See the information provided by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (WCPFC-NC9-2013/IP-03) in response to a request made by the Northern Committee at its Eighth Regular Session (Attachment F of the report of NC8).

² See other relevant decisions of the Commission regarding the methods to be used to estimate $SSB_{\text{current},F=0}$.

3. Acceptable levels of risk

In accordance with Article 6.1(a) of the Convention, the NC will recommend conservation and management measures as needed to ensure that the risk of the stock size declining below the B-limit is very low.

4. Monitoring strategy

The ISC and SC will periodically evaluate the stock size and exploitation rate with respect to the established reference points with a target frequency of no lower than once every three years.

5. Decision rules

B-limit rule:³ In the event that, based on information from the ISC and SC, the stock size is found, with at least 50 percent probability, to have declined below the B-limit at any time, the NC will, at its next regular session or intersessionally if warranted, adopt a reasonable timeline, but no longer than 10 years, for rebuilding the stock to at least $20\%SSB_{\text{current},F=0}$ and recommend conservation and management measures that can be expected to achieve such rebuilding within that timeline, with greater than 50 percent probability.

6. Performance evaluation

If and as more refined management objectives are developed for the stock and/or associated fisheries, the Northern Committee will work with the ISC and SC to evaluate the likely performance of candidate target reference points and/or harvest control rules, including, if appropriate, through a rigorous management strategy evaluation.

³ At the time of adoption of this management framework, there is in place a stock rebuilding plan (which may be amended as necessary) that shall continue to govern management action until the stock is rebuilt. The decision rule adopted here is to be applied if and when the stock becomes overfished in the future, after the stock is rebuilt from its currently overfished state.