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Report on CMM 2015-04 (Pacific bluefin tuna)

WCPFC-NC12-2016/DP-06

KOREA

Implementation Report on the Conservation and Management Measure to Establish a Multi-annual Plan to Rebuild Pacific Bluefin Tuna

(CMM 2015-04)

July 29, 2016

Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea

Pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 11 of the Conservation and Management Measure to Establish a Multi-annual Plan to Rebuild Pacific Bluefin Tuna (CMM 2015-04), the Republic of Korea hereby reports on its implementation of the CMM.

Para 3 (1) and (2). Effort Control and Juvenile Catch Reduction

paragraph 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.

Para 3 (1) Effort Control:

In 2015, twenty-four (24) large-scale purse seiners have caught Pacific bluefin tuna (hereinafter “PBF”), which are below the level of 2002-2004 annual average (30 vessels). The number of vessels (24) remains the same as of July 2016.

Number of Vessels Caught PBF from 2002 to 2004	
2002	32
2003	29
2004	29

<table 1. number of vessels caught PBF from 2002 to 2004>

Para 3 (2) Juvenile (age 0-3/ less than 30kg) Catch Reduction

Korea’s *Ministerial Directive on the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna*, which was introduced in May 2011 for the conservation and management of PBF, was amended in December 2014 to be in line with CMM 2014-04. The Ministerial Directive requires that juvenile PBF catches (age 0-3, less than 30kg) stay below 50% (718 tonnes) of Korea’s 2002-2004 annual average (1,435 tonnes).

Any PBF catches are required to be reported to the President of the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute (NFRDI) under the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of Korea within 24 hours of the catch. Since 2005, the government has been verifying reported PBF catches by Korean purse seiners, checking the number of consigned boxes against the number of fish and cross-checking the reported catches with the sales log sheets maintained at designated consignment markets.

Major requirements of the Ministerial Directive include:

- ✓ The efforts for PBF and the catches of juvenile PBF shall stay below the level prescribed by the relevant conservation and management measures of the WCPFC;
- ✓ Catches of PBF (e.g. nature of catches, quantities) shall be reported to the government; and
- ✓ When a certain level (80-90% of allowed level) of the total PBF juvenile catch has been reached, the government shall take necessary measures to prevent the total catches from exceeding the catch limit (e.g. prohibition of PBF catches and closure of designated consignment market for PBF).

The Korean government has been taking various measures to keep the juvenile catches below the established limit (50% of Korea's 2002-2004 annual average). For example, when 80-90 percent of the allowed level of juvenile catch has been exhausted, the government immediately prohibits any sales of PBF in both domestic and international markets through the closure of designated consignment markets for PBF and statistical documents. As a case in point, when 84% (660 tonnes) of Korea's PBF catch limits were reached on March 31, 2015, the government issued an injunction prohibiting the sales of juvenile PBF on April 1, 2015 as a precautionary measure to comply with the relevant provision of the CMM.

Para 4. Catch Management on Non-juvenile PBF

paragraph 4. CCMs shall take every possible measure not to increase catches of Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger from the 2002–2004 annual average levels.

The government informed the industry stakeholders of the results of the regular session of the Northern Committee (NC10, 2014) and the annual meeting of the WCPFC (WCPFC 11, 2014) regarding the catches of PBF larger than 30kg. Korea's domestic regulations require that any PBF catch and relevant information be reported to the NFRDI within 24 hours of the catch, and all PBF be traded only in designated consignment markets to collect accurate catch data and to prevent any illegal trade of PBF.

Also, the government takes measures including the prohibition of fishing and landing of PBF and the closure of designated consignment markets for PBF and statistical documents, if and when there is a risk of seriously undermining the effectiveness of the CMM for PBF.

Para 5. Reporting Requirements for 2002-2004 Baseline Effort and 2013/14 Catch Level

paragraph 5. CCMs shall report their 2002–2004 baseline fishing effort and <30 kg and >=30kg catch levels for 2013 and 2014, by fishery, as referred to in the preceding two paragraphs, 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 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.

The baseline effort (2002-2004) of the Korean large-scale purse seine fleet was 30 vessels (32/2002; 29/2003; and 29/2004), the reference point under which Korea's efforts are being kept pursuant to paragraph 3(1) of CMM2014-04. The PBF catches in 2015 were 677 tonnes in total, among which 676 tonnes were less than 30kg and 1 tonne was larger than 30kg. The PBF larger than 30kg (1 tonne) were either caught by set nets or large-scale purse seiners as bycatch during their operation.

less than 30kg				30kg or larger		
purse seiner	set net	others	subtotal	purse seiner	set net	subtotal
675.1	0.8	0.4	676.3	0.7	0.3	1

<table 2. PBF catches (tonnes) in 2015 by size and fishery type>

Para 7. Juvenile Monitoring

paragraph 7. CCMs, in particular those catching juvenile Pacific bluefin tuna, shall take measures to monitor and obtain prompt results of recruitment of juveniles each year.

Korea has been working on the sampling of juvenile PBF to monitor PBF recruitments. Since 2010, the sampling has been conducted in the areas near Jeju island and in some part of Korea's South Sea and East Sea adjacent to Busan. The monitoring was not carried out in 2015, but a week-long monitoring survey was resumed in 2016 during the period of June 20-27 in waters around Jeju island¹. An analysis on the collected data is currently underway, and the result will be presented at the regular session of the ISC in 2017.

Para 8. Prevention of PBF Trade that Contravenes the CMM

paragraph 8. 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

¹ A 8-meter-long ring net with the opening of 2 meters in diameter and the mesh size of 334μm was used for the survey.

that undermine the effectiveness of this CMM, especially measures prescribed in the paragraph 3 above. CCMs shall cooperate for this purpose.

Korea's Ministerial Directive on the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna requires that all PBF caught by Korean vessels be sold only at designated consignment fisheries markets in order to prevent any commercial transaction of PBF and its products that undermine the effectiveness of the CMM. The international trade of PBF is also being monitored through statistical documents accompanying the export of PBF to foreign markets, mostly the Japanese market.

Also, the government takes measures including the prohibition of fishing and landing of PBF and the closure of designated consignment markets for PBF and statistical documents, if and when there is a risk of seriously undermining the effectiveness of the CMM for PBF (e.g. overages of PBF juvenile catch limits).

Para 10. Strengthening Data Collection System

paragraph10. CCMs shall also take measures necessary to strengthen data collecting system for Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries in order to improve the data quality and timeliness of all the data reporting.

The government requires designated consignment market representatives to report the records of PBF sales to the government for verification purposes. From 2015, all fishers are required to report to the government any catches of PBF within 24 hours of the catch. The NFRDI takes some of PBF sold in designated consignment markets to collect and analyze biological data (e.g. weight, length, stomach contents and otolith, etc). From 2016, the NFRDI has been collecting tissue samples for close-kin analyses.

Para 13. Cooperation with the IATTC Contracting Parties

paragraph 13. To enhance effectiveness of this measure, CCMs are encouraged to communicate with and, if appropriate, work with the concerned IATTC contracting parties bilaterally.

So far, no formal bilateral arrangement on PBF with the IATTC Contracting Parties has been made. Korea stands ready to fully cooperate with the IATTC Contracting Parities to observe this CMM.