

**INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**

**100<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

**Phoenix, Arizona, USA**

**1-5 August 2022**

**PROPOSAL IATTC-100 F-1**

**SUBMITTED BY CANADA**

**PROPOSAL TO ADOPT A HARVEST STRATEGY FOR NORTH  
PACIFIC ALBACORE IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN**

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM**

North Pacific albacore tuna is a highly migratory species distributed across the Pacific Ocean, north of the equator. Commercially and culturally valuable fisheries using different gear types (troll, pole-and-line, longline) exploit this species throughout this vast range. As a result, both the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) share responsibilities pertaining to its conservation and management in their respective convention areas. In the IATTC Convention Area, vessels using troll and pole-and-line gear comprise the principal fisheries targeting North Pacific albacore tuna that undertake seasonal trans-Pacific migrations. In addition, some longline vessels also report catch.

According to the latest (2020) stock assessment from the ISC, the current estimate of spawning stock biomass (SSB) is approximately 46 per cent of dynamic unfished SSB (SSB<sub>0\_d</sub>) – more than three times the estimate of SSB<sub>MSY</sub>. The stock is currently managed through effort controls by both the IATTC and WCPFC.

Following the conclusion of a management strategy evaluation (MSE) process for north Pacific albacore last year, the IATTC and WCPFC now have the responsibility to integrate the MSE results into binding decisions aimed at ensuring the long term conservation and management of this important species throughout its distribution in both convention areas. To this end, Canada recommends the IATTC seize the opportunity, at its 100<sup>th</sup> meeting, to adopt the proposed harvest strategy which includes the following elements:

- Quantitative management objectives,
- Reference points (limit, threshold, and target)
- Acceptable levels of risk of not breaching the limit reference point
- Monitoring strategy
- Harvest control rules establishing specific actions to be taken relative to the reference points.

By adopting this proposal, the Commission has an opportunity to take a forward-looking fisheries conservation and management approach and demonstrate its commitment to the long term sustainability of a key tuna species under its responsibility.

## **HARVEST STRATEGY FOR NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE**

*The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Phoenix, Arizona (USA), on the occasion of its 100<sup>th</sup> Meeting:*

*Recalling* Resolutions C-05-02, C-13-03, and C-18-03 on North Pacific albacore tuna;

*Recalling* further its responsibility for the conservation and management of tunas and tuna-like species in the Convention Area, and for the formulation of recommendations to its Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) with regard to the conservation and management of these resources;

*Observing* that the 2020 stock assessment of North Pacific albacore from the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) indicates that North Pacific albacore tuna is neither being overfished nor is it in an overfished state;

*Further Observing* that the spawning stock biomass of North Pacific albacore tuna has remained stable at relatively high levels during the recent historical period;

*Recognizing* that fishing effort limits continue to be an effective management tool for troll and pole-and-line fisheries targeting this stock in the convention area of the IATTC;

*Recognizing* that changes in oceanographic conditions are likely to influence ecosystem characteristics throughout the North Pacific Ocean, thereby resulting in potential changes to the population dynamics and distribution of this species;

*Recognizing* the importance of working with the WCPFC, as provided for in Article XXIV of the Antigua Convention, in order to manage North Pacific albacore tuna throughout its entire migratory range spanning/across the Pacific Ocean north of the equator;

*Recalling* further Article 22(4) of the WCPFC Convention that provides for cooperation with the IATTC regarding fish stocks that occur in the convention areas of both organizations;

*Taking into account* Article IV of the Antigua Convention calling upon members of the Commission to apply the precautionary approach, as described in the relevant provisions of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, as well as the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, for the conservation, management and sustainable use of fish stocks covered by the Convention;

*Bearing in mind* that Article 7.5.3 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing indicates that regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) should determine stock-specific target and limit reference points, the action to be taken if reference points are approached or exceeded, and measures to be taken to ensure that limit reference points will not be exceeded;

*Considering* the ISC has determined that its management strategy evaluation (MSE) work is complete and ready to form the basis for adoption of a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore; and,

*Recalling* that, as directed in Resolution C-18-03, the IATTC Scientific Staff has made recommendations in respect of the ISC's MSE framework for consideration by the Commission;

*Further recalling* the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), at its 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, as well the IATTC Scientific Staff, recommended that the Commission use the results of the concluded MSE process to

establish reference points and a harvest control rule (HCR) for North Pacific albacore tuna.

*The IATTC therefore resolves that:*

1. A harvest strategy, which includes the elements described in this Resolution, shall be adopted for all fisheries which harvest North Pacific albacore tuna in the Convention Area.

### **MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

- a. Considering the overarching objective of ensuring the sustainability of North Pacific albacore tuna and current fisheries supported by the stock in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the following management objectives are established:
  - i. Maintain Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) above the Limit Reference Point, with a probability of at least 80% over the next 10 years.
  - ii. Maintain depletion of total biomass around historical (2006-2015) average depletion over the next 10 years.
  - iii. Maintain fishing intensity (F) at the target reference point with a probability of at least 50% over the next 10 years.
  - iv. To the extent practicable, management changes (e.g., catch and/or effort) should be relatively gradual between years.

### **REFERENCE POINTS**

- b. For the purpose of the North Pacific albacore harvest strategy, the following reference points are established:
  - i. Target reference point (TRP) =  $F_{45\%SPR}$ , which is the fishing intensity (F) level that results in the stock producing 45% of spawning potential ratio (SPR)
  - ii. Threshold reference point ( $SSB_{threshold}$ ) =  $30\%SSB_{current,F=0}$ , which is 30% of the dynamic unfished spawning stock biomass
  - iii. Limit reference point (LRP) =  $14\%SSB_{current,F=0}$ , which is 14% of the dynamic unfished spawning stock biomass

### **ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF RISK**

- c. The risk of breaching the Limit Reference Point based on the most current estimate of SSB shall be no greater than 20%.

### **MONITORING**

- d. The IATTC staff shall collaborate with the ISC to conduct regular stock assessments of North Pacific albacore tuna every three years, if possible.
- e. When performing a stock assessment, IATTC staff shall collaborate with the ISC to consider if the biology, environmental conditions, data sources, status of the stock, and/or other underlying assumptions have changed substantially enough to warrant revisiting the

components in this harvest strategy.

### HARVEST CONTROL RULES

- f. Relative to the reference points established in this resolution, the harvest control rule (HCR) shall operate as follows consistent with Figure 1:
  - i. If the most recent stock assessment indicates that the latest estimate of SSB is above  $SSB_{\text{threshold}}$  with a probability of at least 50%, the Commission shall aim to ensure fishing intensity is maintained at the TRP with a probability of at least 50%.
  - ii. If the most recent stock assessment indicates that the latest estimate of SSB is below  $SSB_{\text{threshold}}$  with a probability of greater than 50%, and above the LRP with a probability of at least 80%, the Commission shall revise<sup>1</sup> the conservation and management measures currently in force for this stock in the IATTC Convention Area with a view to reducing fishing intensity (F) and growing SSB back to levels equal to or greater than  $SSB_{\text{threshold}}$ .
  - iii. If the most recent stock assessment indicates that the latest estimate of SSB is below the LRP with a probability of 20% or greater, the Commission shall ensure fishing intensity (F) is reduced to a minimum level. In addition, CPCs shall, in collaboration with the ISC and the WCPFC, adopt no later than 2 years a plan<sup>2</sup> to rebuild SSB to levels above the LRP within 10 years with a probability of 90%.

### OTHER PROVISIONS

2. The Commission shall promote compatibility between the harvest strategy adopted through this Resolution, and any future harvest strategy adopted in the WCPFC with respect to North Pacific albacore.
3. The Director shall communicate this Resolution to the WCPFC Secretariat.

---

<sup>1</sup> When adopting proposed revisions to the conservation and management measures proposed, which may include *inter alia* reductions in fishing effort, CPCs will take into account historical fishing activity and the source of increased fishing mortality in reference to the average effort referenced in Resolution C-18-03. In addition, and in line with paragraph 4 of this resolution, these revisions shall be compatible with revisions to the conservation and management measures adopted for North Pacific albacore by the WCPFC.

<sup>2</sup> When developing a rebuilding plan, CPCs will take into account historical fishing activity and the source of increased fishing mortality, socioeconomic factors, as per UNFSA Article 6.3.c., as well as which CPCs, if any, contributed to exceeding the LRP.

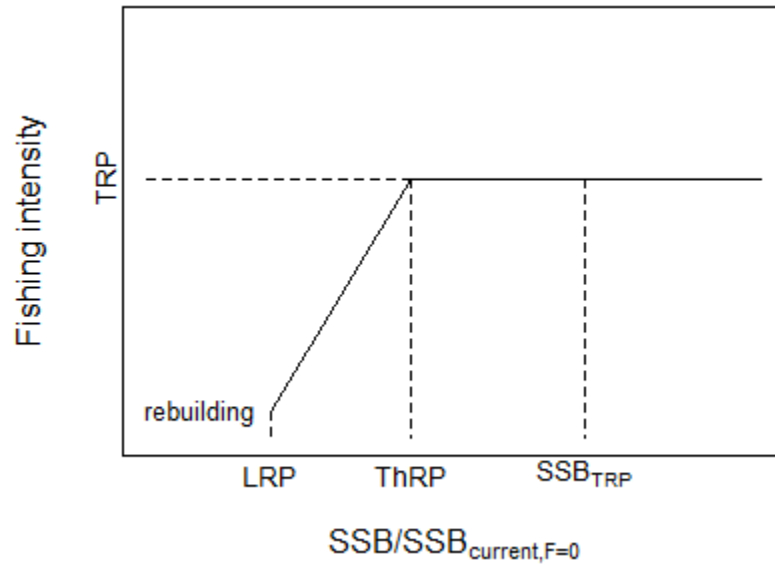


Figure. 1. Illustration of the harvest control rules with target reference point (TRP), threshold reference point (ThRP), limit reference point (LRP), and the expected SSB when fishing at the TRP ( $SSB_{TRP}$ ). The harvest control rules includes the triggering of a rebuilding plan if the  $SSB/SSB_{current,F=0}$  falls below the LRP.