

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

92ND MEETING

Mexico City, Mexico
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PROPOSAL IATTC-92 D-1

SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES

REBUILDING STRATEGY FOR PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) gathered in Mexico City, Mexico, on the occasion of its 92nd Meeting:

Taking into Account that the 2nd Joint Working Group meeting of the IATTC-Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) will be held in August 2017 and will discuss consideration and development of a rebuilding strategy (second rebuilding target and timeline, etc.) and long-term precautionary management framework (management objectives, limit and target reference points, harvest control rules, etc.);

Recognizing Resolution C-16-08 in which the Commission agreed to a long term management framework, including an initial (first) rebuilding target of $SSB_{med,1952-2014}$ (the median point estimate for 1952-2014), which is to be achieved by 2024 with at least 60 percent probability,

Further Recognizing that Resolution C-16-08 provides that the Commission will adopt, by 2018, reference points, harvest control rules, and a second rebuilding target to be achieved by 2030;

Recalling that Article VII, paragraph 1(c) of the Antigua Convention provides that the Commission shall "...maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance which can produce the maximum sustainable yield (msy)..." and that 20 percent of the unfished spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been recommended as a reasonable proxy for B_{MSY} for stocks with at least average resilience;¹

Acknowledging that at the WCPFC Annual Meeting in December 2016, the WCPFC requested that the NC consider that Pacific bluefin tuna be rebuilt to 20 percent unfished SSB with a 60 percent probability by 2034 at the latest;

Considering the recommendation made by the IATTC's Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) at its eighth meeting in May 2017: "To further its work on the recovery of Pacific bluefin tuna, the SAC supports the continued coordination between the IATTC and WCPFC to develop a rebuilding plan including how the second rebuilding target will be calculated, any assumptions about recruitment that need to be made, and a required probability of reaching that target."

¹ For example: Mace P.M. 1994. Relationships between common biological reference points used as thresholds and targets of fisheries management strategies. Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci. 51:110-122.

Resolves as follows:

Recruitment scenario used in SSB projections

1. In evaluating stock rebuilding through 2024 and adopting any needed management action, the NC and IATTC should be suitably precautionary with respect to future recruitment, such as by focusing on the “low recruitment” scenario when reviewing the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean’s (ISC) SSB projections until 2024. The low recruitment scenario could include resampling from the relatively low recruitment period (1980-1989)) or, if lower, resampling from the most recent 10 years of recruitment.

Harvest scenarios to reach the initial rebuilding target

2. As stated in the projections completed by the ISC in April 2017, reducing the catch of small fish results in positive impacts on SSB trajectories, even with increases in the catch of large fish in western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO). Therefore, harvest scenarios should be adopted that include a reduction in the catch of small fish in the WCPO to reach the initial rebuilding target by 2024.

Second rebuilding target

3. In continuing the commitments of both the IATTC and WCPFC towards further developing and implementing a rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin tuna, the second rebuilding target shall be $20\%SSB_{\text{current}, F=0}^2$ by 2030 with a probability of at least 60 percent.
4. The Commission shall revise or adopt measures to achieve the second rebuilding target. Progress towards the second rebuilding target shall be reviewed based on the results of stock assessments and SSB projections to be conducted by ISC.

Limit reference point

5. The limit reference point for the stock size (B-limit) shall be $15\%SSB_{\text{current}, F=0}^2$.

Management strategy evaluation

6. The Commission encourages the ISC to begin a formal management strategy evaluation (MSE) on Pacific bluefin tuna in 2018; recognizing that developing the operating model and other aspects of the MSE will take time, further dialogue between the IATTC, the NC, and the ISC is encouraged.

² Consistent with the method used by the WCPFC with respect to its limit reference points, the time period to be used for $SSB_{\text{current}, F=0}$ shall have a length of 10 years and be based on the years $t_1=y_{\text{last}}-10$ to $t_2=y_{\text{last}}-1$ where y_{last} is the last year used in the assessment; and the approach used for calculating the unfished biomass levels shall be based on scaled estimates of recruitment according to the stock recruitment relationship.