



# NOAA FISHERIES

## Meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee to Advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

Teleconference call  
June 10, 2019

### Meeting Minutes

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**Meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee  
to Advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**

**June 10, 2019**

**Meeting Minutes**

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**Meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee  
to Advise the U.S. Section to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**

**Meeting conducted by teleconference**

**June 10, 2019**

**Meeting Minutes**

1. The meeting was opened at 10 am on June 10, 2019, with a roll call; the list of participants is provided in Attachment 1.
2. The Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for International Fisheries, Mr. Andrew Lawler, provided opening remarks, and then turned the meeting over to the Chair of the PAC, Mr. Stuart Chikami.
3. Mr. Michael Tosatto, Regional Administrator of the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office, noted that the quorum of the PAC has not been met, therefore if any recommendations are made, they will not be an official recommendations from the PAC. However, the notes and discussion will still be captured.
4. A PAC member suggested the addition of an agenda item on the meeting of the Joint IATTC/WCPFC Northern Committee (NC) Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management. The Chair and NOAA agreed that the item will be covered under the existing Pacific bluefin tuna agenda (PBF) item (Agenda Item 2).

**Agenda Item 1 - Brief overview of WCPFC15 and any relevant follow-on information**

5. NOAA referred to the provisional [Outcomes Document](#) produced by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Chair and Secretariat after the 15<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC15). NOAA provided a brief summary of some of the conservation and management measures (CMMs) adopted at WCPFC15 and how NOAA has (or will) implement these decisions.

**Agenda Item 2 - U.S. priorities for WCPFC in 2019**

6. With reference to the document provided in advance of the meeting, NOAA summarized the issues tentatively identified as U.S. priorities for 2019 in the WCPFC, including identification of five top-priority issues: tropical tunas, the Compliance Monitoring Scheme, PBF, at-sea transshipment, and North Pacific striped marlin. NOAA requested input from members of the PAC on the priorities.
7. PAC members requested that harvest strategies and South Pacific albacore be included as top priorities issues this year. A PAC member questioned the inclusion of PBF as a priority for WCPFC16 rather than for the NC. NOAA explained that the list is not meant

to apply to the work of the WCPFC as a whole, regardless of which subsidiary bodies might see most of the work.

8. The Chair moved onto the sub-topics of the tentative U.S. priorities. Tropical tunas were deferred to Agenda Item 3.
9. NOAA provided an update on Compliance Monitoring Scheme (CMS): at WCPFC15, a revised CMS was adopted (CMM 2018-07). The top priority for the United States on the CMS will be to come to a resolution on the issue of flag state investigations. The United States views this an integral part of the CMS, but FFA members continue to have concerns about its inclusion. The revised CMS included an ambitious list of future work – this year, the United States will be focusing on the development of audit points and streamlining reporting requirements and eliminating any duplicative reporting requirements.
10. A PAC member commended the United States for its effort on the ongoing CMS goals. This member suggested that NGO participation in the working group was an important goal, especially in closed sessions. NOAA responded that although that goal is identified in the work plan, it was not identified as one of this year's activities, but the United States will stay engaged on the issue.
11. NOAA provided an update on PBF noting the response from the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) PBF working group to the request from the NC for additional information on abundance indices and additional projection scenarios. The following topics were also addressed: Japan's intention to submit a proposal to increase catch limits, the ISC 2<sup>nd</sup> PBF Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) workshop (May, 2019), expectations that most of the WCPFC discussion for PBF will occur within the Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting in September 2019, and a summary of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) General Advisory Committee (GAC) meeting comments regarding PBF. The United States is still developing its position on PBF at this time.
12. PAC members thanked NOAA for the update and suggested holding further discussions on negotiating strategies and precautionary quotas. Several PAC members stated it could be premature to consider increases now because the next stock assessment will not occur until 2020.
13. NOAA reviewed the progress regarding at-sea transshipment: an intersessional working group was created by WCPFC16 and is co-chaired by Alex Kahl (NOAA) and Sam Lanwi (Marshall Islands). The group is preparing draft terms of references for the consideration of the working group.
14. A PAC member complimented the United States for prioritizing work on at-sea transshipment, as it has importance in the international arena.
15. NOAA provided an update on North Pacific (NP) striped marlin: at WCPFC15, the United States offered to submit a proposed rebuilding plan for WCPFC16. At this time,

NOAA is waiting to see the results of the new ISC stock assessment and projections, but intends to develop a rebuilding plan in the coming months.

16. A PAC member noted that the ISC is meeting in July to finalize recommendations and asked NOAA to share specific conservation advice as the information becomes available. Another PAC member requested to discuss the NP striped marlin stock assessment when it becomes available and asked NOAA to describe the rebuilding plan and detail any related issues.
17. NOAA responded that the United States produced a draft rebuilding plan last year that was circulated to the PAC, which may provide ideas of elements in a rebuilding plan. The PBF rebuilding plan could be used as a guideline to rebuilding plan elements applicable to NP striped marlin. The stock assessment should be available after the ISC meeting. NOAA stated that the rebuilding plan is the goal for this year, and a revised CMM to limit fishing activities will likely be developed in the future.

### **Agenda Item 3 - CMM 2018-01-items for renegotiation in 2019**

18. NOAA provided an overview of CMM 2018-01. The overall measure is in effect through 2020. The only provision that will expire at the end of 2019 is the small-garbage FAD provision (para. 18), which is subject to evaluation of its effects at WCPFC16 in December. Its effects will likely be hard to assess this year because the relevant data will not be available, and it may take a member to submit a proposal to keep the provision. Expectations for 2019 also included making progress on the 2020 tasks of: (1) setting the total allowable catch (TAC) and allocation (para. 44) for bigeye tuna (BET) in longline (LL) fisheries, and (2) establishing purse seine (PS) fishing effort limits on the high seas for all members (para. 28). Regarding the first task, NOAA is developing a concept proposal that would expand on the concept introduced in the 2018 U.S. proposal, in which allocations would take into account the monitoring, control, and surveillance efforts of members. Regarding the second task, NOAA is developing a concept proposal that would assign fishing effort limits to all members, which could be used or transferred by members without any regard to flag or zone. The Commission plans to agree on hard limits for PS fishing effort limits on the high seas by 2020; proposals could be put forward in 2019. Additionally, the United States plans to continue to explore ways to mitigate any adverse impacts to American Samoa of the Commission's limits.
19. A PAC member stated that the LL BET catch limits are important to the Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) and asked NOAA to explain the concept proposal it has in mind.
20. NOAA responded that the idea is to submit and discuss a concept proposal at WCPFC16, with the goal of progressing towards an agreement that would be finalized by the meeting in December 2020.
21. A member of the public emphasized that this subject is important to the HLA and wanted information on who would be working on developing the concept paper, the process, and whether the PAC would be provided time to review the paper before it is presented to the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC).

22. NOAA responded that between now and the PAC meeting in October 2019, a concept paper will be developed. NOAA will look for advice from stakeholders, such as HLA, for technical advice and support in drafting. The deadline for proposals to WCPFC16 is November 5, 2019.
23. A PAC member noted that PS fishing effort allocations should be based on science, rather than politics or other aspirations. The PAC member preferred that any concept proposal prepared by the United States government would give high priority to historical catches by flag as opposed to zone-based considerations.
24. NOAA stated that the history of catches would be considered, but science, such as the status of stocks, and transferability of the limits, would be planks of the concept.
25. A PAC member commented that in respect to transferability, it is not used in paragraph (b) of the key steps with respect to PS fishing effort limits, but is used in paragraph (c), with respect to the LL BET catch limits (see Attachment 3 for draft U.S. priorities document). They noted that they would like it to be included as an element in the concept proposals for both PS and LL.
26. A PAC member noted paragraph (d) of the key steps (see Attachment 3), regarding ways to mitigate adverse impacts of limits on American Samoa and whether it applies to South Pacific albacore. NOAA replied that the step was intended to relate primarily to tropical tunas, including both the LL and PS fisheries. With respect to South Pacific albacore, the U.S. will continue to look at how potential management measures would affect the territories, particularly the American Samoa LL fishery.
27. A member of the public asked whether, once the United States government has received feedback from the American Tunaboat Association (ATA), HLA, and others, is planning to engage with other CCMs in advance of WCPFC16.
28. NOAA responded that it would like to take advantage of any bilateral engagements, including other meetings that involve WCPFC members, but are no concrete plans at this time.
29. A PAC member asked NOAA if there have been discussions in the WCPFC Scientific Committee (SC) on the review of the stock assessment for BET and the prospect of a recruitment regime shift provided the IATTC are currently working on a BET stock assessment.
30. NOAA responded that the IATTC has different standards on regime shifts and although NOAA has discussed various covariates and predictors, there have been no conclusions drawn.

#### **Agenda Item 4 - Joint Tuna RFMO FAD Working Group**

31. NOAA provided a brief overview of the Joint Tunas RFMO FAD Working Group: the meeting was held in San Diego from May 8 through 10, 2019. Andrew Lawler led the United States delegation, which was large, likely due to the location. Two WCPFC staff

were present at the meeting; however, no representatives from the Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) nor Asian delegations attended. There were presentations on a variety of topics including RFMO FAD management collaboration. The meeting resulted in 25 non-binding recommendations to all tuna RFMOs. The joint-working group had provided a list of FAD definitions, to which the U.S. delegation had concerns with, which were deflected from becoming recommendations to being sent to RFMO technical working groups for further review. Overall, there was frustration from participants over the amount of material covered during this meeting, which may result in a reduced scope for future meetings of this working group.

32. A PAC member asked if the group agreed to meet again in two years.
33. NOAA responded that they were unsure of an agreement of a specific timeline for a future meeting, however, one recommendation was that RFMO's themselves should have discussion and provide advice on what this working group should focus on in the future.
34. A PAC member stated they wanted to see a more broadly accepted definition of a FAD that is similar to definition adopted with respect to an IATTC resolution C-18-05, including tracking and deployment terms so the United States can have a baseline for good management and compliance. The member wondered what progress had been made on this definition and whether the United States is considering the FAD definition a priority.
35. NOAA offered to distribute the list of the 25 recommendations to those interested.
36. A PAC member asked whether biodegradable FAD materials were discussed.
37. NOAA responded that the United States delegation entered the meeting in anticipation of having this discussion, however, due to a large number of scientific presentations, there was little to no discussion on biodegradable FAD materials.
38. The PAC member noted there are ongoing experimentation with various materials that could be used for biodegradable FADs in American Samoa, therefore examples of what others have used and their successes (or failures) would be useful.
39. The Chair noted that various ongoing studies in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans were discussed, but as NOAA mentioned, there were no presentations or additional engagement afterwards on biodegradable FAD materials.
40. A PAC member asked to receive a copy of the presentations related to biodegradable FAD materials from the meeting.
41. NOAA responded that they have detailed notes and links to work group presentations they can provide.

## **Agenda Item 5 - Participating Territories issues**

### ***a. American Samoa-recognition of special requirements of U.S. participating territories/SIDSs***

42. Department of State (DoS) provided a general overview on WCPFC consideration of the special requirements of developing states, in particular small island developing states and territories, consistent with Article 30 of the Convention and various conservation and management measures. Special requirements and disproportionate burden are key elements of most negotiations at the WCPFC. The United States and Pacific Island countries often have different views over how to assess and apply concepts relating to special requirements and disproportionate burden. In recent years, the United States has been working closely with U.S. Participating Territories, especially American Samoa, to ensure its interests are reflected in debates over special requirements and disproportionate burden. Other members have been open to considering the concerns of U.S. Participating Territories like American Samoa, but have requested more information on the impacts of measures and often apply a higher burden of proof on the United States and American Samoa when demonstrating disproportionate burden. The United States will continue to assess impacts on American Samoa and this could inform our positions when renegotiating the tropical tuna measure and other measures in the future. DoS welcomed questions and comments.
  
43. A member of the public thanked the United States for the support to find relief for American Samoa's concerns about disproportionate burden and special requirements. They were hopeful that the United States would continue to seek ways to address these issues for American Samoa in future meetings. American Samoa would like a long term solution and to reinstate the high seas days for U.S. PS vessels that were reduced beginning in 2014. The member stated there will be a Pacific Island leaders meeting in August, which may be a good time for the United States Government to reach out to PNA and other island nations in hopes of gaining support for American Samoa, as the difficulties they face that are similar to those of other island nations.

## **Agenda Item 6 - Upcoming WCPFC Meetings**

44. NOAA listed upcoming WCPFC meetings in 2019 and the deadlines for requests to participate on the U.S. delegation for each meeting. NOAA and DoS also noted the need to work around logistical and security concerns related to the venue for WCPFC16.
  
45. A PAC member asked if the United States delegation to WCPFC16 will be limited by the availability of accommodations.
  
46. DoS responded that accommodations will not be a limiting factor in Port Moresby, PNG, though the delegation members will need to coordinate hotels and ground transportation to ensure conditions are as safe as possible. However, accreditation may be an issue and affect our final delegation size.



## **Agenda Item 7 - PAC meeting logistics**

47. NOAA gave a brief overview of upcoming PAC meeting logistics and noted that future PAC conference calls will occur at the discretion of the Chair. The October PAC meeting will be held from October 10 through 11, 2019, in Honolulu, Hawaii. NOAA updated participants on the status of the 2019-2020 PAC member nominations.
48. A PAC member stated they hoped the new PAC members would be announced soon so there will be sufficient time to learn the issues and meet before the PAC meeting in October. The Chair noted a new Chair will need to be selected at that time.

## **Agenda Item 8 - Other Business**

### ***a. South Pacific albacore***

49. NOAA noted that in 2018, WPCFC adopted a target reference point (TRP) for South Pacific albacore and that the harvest strategies workplan for 2019 includes a tasking to the science provider to identify a range of alternative catch pathways to the interim TRP and time frames that achieve an interim TRP of 0.56  $SSB_{F=0}$  (i.e., spawning stock biomass (SSB) in the absence of fishing). The United States had contacted New Zealand on its plans to progress the South Pacific Albacore roadmap, but had not received a response.
50. A PAC member reiterated they would like to see South Pacific albacore as a top priority for the United States for WCPFC16. Last year there was no intersessional meeting about South Pacific albacore, and the PAC member hoped there might be one this year. The member stated there was a push to expand the South Pacific albacore assessment through its range (as opposed to just the Convention area) but data gaps in troll fisheries may make this process difficult. This member had questions revolving around the TRP of 0.56  $SSB_{F=0}$  of the SSB over 26 years and what the implications were.
51. NOAA acknowledged all of the PAC members concerns. Regarding data gaps for troll fisheries, more information will be needed to better answer the question, however, NOAA stated there were some data issues that would preclude a cross-Pacific stock assessment for South Pacific albacore and any cross-Pacific stock assessment would need to be agreed upon between the WCPFC and IATTC. In regards to the TRP, 0.56  $SSB_{F=0}$  was agreed upon and is the interim TRP, which suggests there is room for future discussion.
52. In response to a question, NOAA noted the models used to calculate SSB of South Pacific albacore is similar to those calculated for PBF. The current size of the SSB of South Pacific albacore is 0.52  $SSB_{F=0}$ .
53. A PAC member asked NOAA to identify the data gaps and further explain the SSB of South Pacific albacore (0.52  $SSB_{F=0}$ ) and how it related to the TRP of 0.56  $SSB_{F=0}$ . Further, it was noted that IATTC scientists mentioned the idea of SPC collaborative assessments, as the catch in the overlap area is of concern.

54. NOAA stated the next assessment for South Pacific albacore is not scheduled to take place until 2021, so there will be future discussions on this topic. NOAA explained that since current SSB is at 0.52  $SSB_{F=0}$  and the target is 0.56  $SSB_{F=0}$ , there needs to be a reduction in fishing in order to increase biomass, and how to accomplish that will be discussed in the future. WCPFC agreed that the interim TRP should be reached not later than 20 years, so they have 20 years to increase biomass (by reducing catch and fishing) to reach the interim TRP.
55. A PAC member stated their concern with the increasing number of troll fishing vessels and increased South Pacific albacore catches during the last two seasons.

***b. Harvest Strategies***

56. NOAA noted that there was no agreement on whether to establish a harvest strategy working group at WCPFC15, and the chair's solution was to add on an extra day to the upcoming WCPFC16 meeting. It is unclear how the new chair will use the additional day and whether this will translate into more time allocated for discussion on harvest strategies. The harvest strategy work plan details a number of items to be done this year and NOAA provided a brief summary of those items for skipjack (SKJ), BET and yellowfin (YFT) tunas. NOAA welcomed feedback on this subject.
57. A PAC member thanked NOAA for the information and reminded everyone that the work plan calls for development of TRPs for BET and YFT and a review of the SKJ TRP. This member suggested the United States make harvest strategies a top priority relative to some of the other work being considered, particularly as it supports TAC and allocation documents/proposals that are being recommended for the PS and LL industries.

***c. Department of Justice (DOJ) Task Force on Human Trafficking in Fishing in International Waters***

58. NOAA provided an update on this topic: a DOJ task force was established to look into human trafficking in fishing in international waters, which convened work in the fall of 2018. Several PAC members were able to participate in stakeholder calls that occurred in December 2018. A report from the Task Force was due to Congress in March, however, the report has been delayed and is still under development. No full draft report has been circulated to task force members, however, some draft recommendations have been shared with the interagency group. Most of the recommendations had cross-agency implications and were not specifically assigned to be implemented by a sole agency, which made them difficult to evaluate as it was unclear who would be responsible for implementation. Currently, DOJ is working on clearing subsections of the report that are specifically related to individual agencies, such as NOAA, that may be implemented. We expect to see a full draft report with recommendations soon. DOJ is not planning to provide a draft of the report to outside stakeholders. As of now, there have been no signs of any recommendations that are targeted to specific fleets.
59. A PAC member asked NOAA what agencies are involved in the inter-agency task force.

60. NOAA replied that there are many, but some of the key agencies were the following: DOJ (leading), Department of Labor, DoS, Department of Commerce, United States Trade Representative, multiple sub-agencies within Department of Homeland Security, including U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, and the U.S. Coast Guard. There are many more sub-agencies and offices within other agencies participating.
61. A PAC member asked if there has been any discussion on amending the statues so the United States vessels could get crew visas. U.S. vessels participating in Marine Stewardship Council certified fisheries are being asked to focus on crew labor and rights, which is important to the PAC member.
62. NOAA responded that there have been some recommendations that relate to visas, crew, and immigration issues. However, the current status of those recommendations are unknown at this time.

*d. Sharks*

63. NOAA summarized last year's efforts to develop a comprehensive shark measure. Although WCPFC15 was ultimately unable to progress a comprehensive shark measure for adoption, the Commission tasked TCC with considering the outputs from the shark intersessional working group and encouraged members to submit proposals to TCC15. The United States had not heard of any efforts at this time to progress the comprehensive shark measure, but there is potential to have momentum on this topic as the future meetings occur.
64. A PAC member asked if the United States was going to make a proposal and whether Japan will continue to lead the effort.
65. NOAA answered that Japan was still nominally the Chair of the intersessional working group but it was unclear if they were planning other things than what they have already progressed. At this point in time, NOAA was not aware of what the United States will ultimately do, however, NOAA does not have any plans to push forward the comprehensive measure without significant interest from other members. Related to sharks, NOAA noted that the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) is paying for graphics to be added to the safe release guidelines for sharks, which should go to SC and likely through the Commission for adoption. This wouldn't affect guidelines but the graphics may be useful for those who want to produce materials placed on vessels.
66. Another PAC member asked what the United States' policies are on safe handling guidelines and how it is related to PS vessels.
67. NOAA stated there are guidelines for whale sharks, manta rays, and sharks in the Commission but they have not been promulgated into regulations for the United States fishing vessels.
68. NOAA noted there are no specific guidelines in the United States regulations for handling and release of sharks in general but there are regulations specifically for silky

and oceanic whitetip sharks, including a no-retention clause, and handling and release requirements that allow for consideration the health and safety of the crew.

*e. Joint IATTC-NC Meeting*

69. A PAC member requested this topic be added to the agenda and it was covered during Agenda Item 2.

70. NOAA thanked the PAC for its input. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm HST.

## ATTACHMENT 1 – Meeting Participants

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## **ATTACHMENT 2 – Final Agenda**

### **Meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee to Advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission**

June 10, 2019, 10 am - 12 pm HST

#### **AGENDA**

1. Brief overview of WCPFC15 and any relevant follow-on information
2. U.S. priorities for WCPFC in 2019
  - a. Tropical tunas (see agenda item 3)
  - b. Compliance Monitoring Scheme
  - c. Pacific bluefin tuna
  - d. At-sea transshipment
  - e. North Pacific striped marlin
3. CMM 2018-01 – items for renegotiation in 2019
4. Joint Tuna RFMO FAD Working Group
5. Participating territories issues
  - a. American Samoa – recognition of special requirements of U.S. participating territories/SIDSs
6. Upcoming WCPFC meetings
7. PAC meeting logistics
  - a. Future PAC conference calls
  - b. October PAC meeting
  - c. PAC nominations
8. Other Business
  - a. South Pacific albacore
  - b. Harvest strategies
  - c. DOJ Task Force on Human Trafficking in Fishing in International Waters
  - d. Sharks

### ATTACHMENT 3 – Draft of U.S. Priorities

Issue	2019 objective	Notes	Keysteps
<b>Top-priority:</b>			
Tropical tunas	With a view to the general objective of providing for greater LL exploitation and reduced BET mortality from PS while satisfying PICs' concerns with disproportionate conservation burdens, make progress towards favorable allocation decisions in 2020 for BET catches in longline (p44) and purse seine fishing effort (p28) and maintain or improve appropriate FAD definition (p18).	CMM 2018-01 is in effect through 2020; the only provision that expires at end of 2019 is the small-garbage FAD provision (p18), which is subject to evaluation of effects; additional tasks in the measure for 2019 are reviewing: the stock-specific objectives (p15), LL BET limits (p40), deployed FADs limit (p24), and treatment of other commercial fisheries (p50). Expectations for 2019 also include making progress on the 2020 tasks of deciding on BET LL TAC and allocation (p44) and PS fishing effort limits (p28).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assess likely impacts of small-garbage provision on BET and small YFT and develop position (p18).</li> <li>b. Offer concept proposal for setting and allocating BET LL TAC, taking into account stock status and appropriate allocation factors.</li> <li>c. Offer concept proposal for allocating transferable PS fishing effort to CCMs, without regard to flag or zone.</li> <li>d. Continue to explore ways to mitigate adverse impacts of limits on American Samoa.</li> </ul>
Compliance Monitoring Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continue to participate in the CMS process and work to ensure that is a fair and meaningful process.</li> <li>2) Work with Secretariat and others to lead effort to develop audit points for existing measures, and participate actively in other intersessional work on further development of the CMS process.</li> <li>3) Continue to progress work with FFA on the element of flag state investigation so that a revised CMM is adopted in 2019.</li> <li>4) Continue to push for a more permanent CMS measure which includes a mechanism for responses to non-compliance.</li> </ul>	CMM 2018-07 is in effect for 2019 only. During 2019, the measure explicitly calls for the development of process for assessing CCM actions, to replace paragraph 27 and flag state investigations. Additional 2019 work explicit in the measure includes a comprehensive review of the Commission's reporting requirements (see FFA initiative, project 93), development of audit points to clarify obligations to be assessed under the CMS, and further improvements to the online compliance case file system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and provide comments on US dCMR when provided and be prepared to address any areas on US potential compliance issues identified.</li> <li>b. Prepare for and participate in the CMS process by reviewing the dCMR and identifying an areas of non-compliance by other CCMs that the US wishes to highlight or address.</li> <li>c. Be prepared to provide updates on any outstanding Investigation Status issues from past assessments.</li> <li>d. Participate actively in any intersessional work to review the Commission's reporting requirements, develop audit points to clarify obligations to be assessed and improve the online casefile system.</li> <li>e. Consider proposing revised language for FSI process and para 27 of CMM 2018-07.</li> </ul>



<b>Issue</b>	<b>2019 objective</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Key steps</b>
Pacific bluefin tuna	1) Revise CMM if warranted by rebuilding progress, including consideration of limit increases (and ensure commensurate changes in IATTC Resolution). 2) Make progress on CDS for Pacific bluefin.	PBF MSE meeting in May 2019. CDS and JWG meeting to be held in conjunction with NC15.	a. Informal outreach with Japan and other countries.
At-sea transshipment	1) Further develop guidelines for allowing at-sea transshipment and explore implications of further restrictions on at-sea transshipment. 2) Strengthen implementation of existing regulatory scheme, particularly in making use of pre-transshipment notifications and transshipment declarations for enforcement.		a. USA is co-lead, with RMI, the IWG on review of the transshipment measure. b. Work with Secretariat to develop mechanism to facilitate dissemination of notifications and declarations to MCS entities when requested.
NP striped marlin	See adoption of a rebuilding plan for NP striped marlin and possibly exploitation controls.	At WCPFC14, the U.S. committed to submitting a draft rebuilding plan for consideration by WCPFC16.	Offer proposal to WCPFC16 and appropriate subsidiary bodies.

**Lower-priority:**

Sharks	See adoption of a comprehensive shark CMM.	At WCPFC14, Japan agreed to chair a virtual IWG and the chair submitted a draft that was discussed at WCPFC15. WCPFC15 was unable to come to an agreement on a comprehensive CMM, and the WCPFC chair suggested that TCC15 consider outputs of the shark intersessional working group and that members consider submitting proposals ahead of TCC15.	Consider submitting comprehensive shark proposal.
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Issue	2019 objective	Notes	Key steps
FAD management	Provide input on FAD management related to non-entangling and biodegradable FADs.	WCPFC17 to consider adoption of measures of the implementation of non-entangling and/or biodegradable materials on FADs based on guidelines defined by the FAD MO IWG and advice from SC16 and TCC16.	
SP albacore	Continue work on roadmap for South Pacific albacore.	WCPFC15 adopted a TRP for SP albacore at 56% SSB <sub>F=0</sub> . At WCPFC14, New Zealand agreed to lead an electronic intersessional process that will work to develop a plan on allocation, consider improvements in data gaps for longline and troll, and consider elements necessary to implement a harvest strategy for SP albacore. WCPFC15 tasked the group to continue work intersessionally to develop the Roadmap for Effective Conservation and Management of South Pacific albacore. SPC was also tasked in 2019 to identify a range of alternative catch pathways to the interim TRP and timeframes that achieve the interim TRP.	
Harvest strategies	See progress on harvest strategy elements, particularly for southern LL, tropical LL, and tropical PS.		
Overlap area	Deal with problems associated with overlap area, including lack of transparency on implementation of IATTC- WCPFC agreement and cross-endorsement of observers.	Declarations of CCMs to the WCPFC on which RFMO measures they apply in overlap area are available (WCPFC13) but incomplete. Declarations to IATTC don't appear to be available on the IATTC website.	

<b>Issue</b>	<b>2019 objective</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Key steps</b>
SIDS issues	1) Improve efforts to cooperate with SIDS and consult on proposals for disproportionate burden implications. 2) Contribute to efforts to ensure sustainability of Special Requirements Fund.	Work ongoing for the virtual intersessional SRF working group (SRF-WG). SRF-WG currently drafting language to potentially submit as a proposal to the FAC to enhance existing SRF governance and develop a Strategic Investment Plan.	a. Regularize process of consulting with SIDS on proposals and other issues of interest. Consider trip to Honiara to meet with FFA or raise WCPFC on the margins of a potential tuna treaty annual consultation. b. Participate in the virtual intersessional workgroup to review guidelines for the SRF including its scope of use, prioritization, allocation authority, securing of funding at an appropriate level, and transparency of operation, to be presented to FAC with a view to submitting a proposal to WCPFC15 for its consideration.
New members	Continue to push for a process for interested and eligible CNMs to become full members.	US submitted a paper to WCPFC14. FFA members strongly opposed new members or even considering a process for accession. Other members (Japan, EU, China, Chinese Taipei) were supportive of the U.S. position.	United States could resubmit its paper to WCPFC16, with only slight updates required. We could consider reaching out to other supportive members to co-sponsor and/or discuss the issue with PICs in advance of the annual meeting.
Seabirds	Continue to strengthen mitigation effectiveness, particularly in NP small-longline fleets.		a. Push for improved reporting and species identification skills for observers. b. Progress mitigation effectiveness on small LLers in NP. c. Look into data indicating very high albatross catches by Japanese small LLers
Charters	Make progress on dealing with the effects of vessels chartered by SIDS.	Could deal with through specific CMMs like for tropical tunas, or through limits on the use of charters generally.	a. Get a better handle on status and dynamics of charters and how they influence CMMs' outcomes.
NP swordfish	See adoption of reference points for NP swordfish.	US submitted a proposal to NC14, but received significant pushback from Japan on the F-based reference point. NC14 adopted the management objective, but not the other portions of the proposed harvest strategy.	a. Resubmit harvest strategy proposal to by deadline to NC. b. Reach out to Japan ahead of time to gauge if they are willing to agree on an LRP for NP swordfish

<b>Issue</b>	<b>2019 objective</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Key steps</b>
NP albacore	Contribute to MSE progress.	NP albacore MSE meeting in March 2019.	
Catch Documentation Scheme	Continue to engage in the development of a WCPFC catch documentation scheme.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and provide feedback to FFA on any draft measures or other documentations related to the WCPDC CDS.</li> <li>b. Participate in any electronic or in-person meetings relating to the CDS working group.</li> </ul>
Vessel Monitoring System	See adoption of discrete changes to WCPFC rules related to actions taken when a VMS unit stops reporting at sea, as well as development of automated tools to assist the Secretariat and flag States assess VMS compliance on an ongoing basis and for the CMR.	Manual reporting (and poorly-monitored VMS failures by non-US fleets) continue to diminish enforcement effectiveness. This work will require coordination with Secretariat Compliance and VMS staff, potential "proof of concept" demonstration of enhanced VMS- reporting compliance methods, then "marketing" to other Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use VMS working-level bilateral and multilateral meetings (e.g., FFA MCS Working Group) to gain support for alternatives to manual reporting when VMS units stop reporting.</li> <li>b. Develop technical options for enhanced (more timely, effective) monitoring of VMS-reporting compliance.</li> </ul>
High Seas Boarding and Inspection Scheme	See successful development of HSBI database to support at-sea operations.	Commission committed to developing HSBI database; USCG is assisting the Secretariat in that effort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue work with Secretariat to develop database.</li> <li>b. USCG could consider submitting a more detailed HSBI report (NZ model).</li> </ul>
Data	Improve the quantity and quality of fisheries data held and used by the Commission.		
Sea turtles	Improve data collection on sea turtle interactions and continue development of a stronger CMM that more effectively reduces HMS fisheries' adverse impacts, particularly on the leatherback.	New measure adopted in 2018 - includes obligation to review the measure in 2021 to explore further expansion to deep-set. U.S. should continue to push for modifications to the ROP MSDF alongside work scheduled for 2019 - including project 93 and development of observer data collection elements for transshipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to track Project 93 and development of observer data collection elements for transshipment - consider proposing modifications to the ROP MSDF to TCC15.</li> <li>b. Track implementation of CMM 2018-04.</li> <li>c. Consider development of a proposal to further expand CMM 2018-04 in 2021.</li> </ul>
Regional Observer Programme	See adoption of improvements to CMM and/or SSPs to speed provision of observer reports to flag States for investigations.	WCPFC15 directed TCC WG to continue to address the flow of observer reports to flag States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Lead WG to develop recommendations to TCC15.</li> <li>b. Track implementation of pre-notification scheme; seek improvement as needed.</li> </ul>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>2019 objective</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Key steps</b>
Strategic plan			a. Be prepared to react to a draft medium-term corporate plan to be prepared by the Secretariat.
Port State measures			
eR and eM			
IUU Vessel List			a. Participate in routine listing procedures.
Marine debris/pollution			a. Explore opportunities for ALDFG harmonization in RFMOs.