



# NOAA FISHERIES

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

Teleconference call  
April 28, 2020

## Meeting Minutes

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June 2020

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

**April 28, 2020**

**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**

**April 28, 2020**

**Meeting Minutes**

1. The meeting was opened at 10 am on April 28, 2020, with a roll call; the list of participants is provided in Attachment 1.
2. The Chair of the PAC, Mr. Ryan Steen, provided opening remarks, and then turned the meeting over to Mr. Michael Tosatto, Regional Administrator of the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO).

**Agenda Item 1 – Brief overview of WCPFC16 and any relevant follow-on information**

1. NOAA referred to the provisional [Outcomes Document](#) produced by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Chair and Secretariat after the 16<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC16). NOAA also referred to the letter by Mr. Tosatto to the chairs of the Western Pacific, North Pacific, and Pacific Councils, which discussed outcomes of WCPFC16 and NOAA Fisheries' intentions with respect to implementing those outcomes. NOAA provided a summary of the conservation and management measures (CMMs) adopted at WCPFC16 and which would require domestic implementation.

**Agenda Item 2 – U.S. priorities for WCPFC in 2020**

2. NOAA highlighted the tentative U.S. priorities for WCPFC in 2020 and asked for PAC feedback. The tentative priorities are organized into three levels: top, medium, and continuing. The last category are live issues that may not have specific objectives that the United States is working towards this year.
3. A member of the PAC shared two suggestions: 1) the status of the oceanic whitetip shark continues to decline despite management actions, so it is important to continue to push for additional action, and 2) in light of COVID-19 and the need to remove observers from boats, it is important to implement electronic reporting (ER) and electronic monitoring (EM) WCPFC-wide.
4. Another PAC member asked NOAA where in the agenda it plans to discuss key steps regarding tropical tunas. In addition, he agreed with the statement by the previous PAC member on oceanic whitetip shark status, however, there needs to be more work on stock projections and the effects of no retention on stock status.

5. NOAA explained that key steps for tropical tunas will be discussed under Agenda Item 3.
  - a. *Tropical tunas (see agenda item 3)*
  - b. *Pacific bluefin tuna*
6. NOAA provided an update on Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF): the PBF working group of the International Scientific Committee (ISC) for tuna and tuna-like species in the Pacific Ocean met in March to conduct a benchmark stock assessment and run projections. The summary report is expected to be available by May 15, 2020 to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) website and the full report is expected to be finalized at the ISC plenary meeting in July. As NOAA has not seen the full report yet, it cannot discuss results in detail but understand that the results are similar to the last assessment – they indicate the stock is rebuilding in that stock biomass is increasing and fishing mortality has been decreasing in recent years. It is unclear how COVID-19 will affect the meetings scheduled for this year, and the United States anticipates that Japan’s positions will remain the same as last year (request an increase to the catch limits). The United States has reached out to Japan to start discussing PBF management, and Japan’s position will likely shape the U.S. position.
7. A PAC member thanked the United States for maintaining a science-based position last year in discussions with Japan and others. He noted it was important to make sure Japan is able to keep stakeholders happy but also maintain good science. He also noted his interest in the assessment when it is available and suggested that the United States prioritize the management strategy evaluation (MSE) for PBF, as it is important to have progress with MSE to ensure stock health in the long run.
8. NOAA thanked the PAC member for his comments and noted it received a first rough draft of a CMM for the PBF Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) to the CDS virtual working group. The United States as well as Pew sent comments to Japan and Japan is expected to produce a second draft in June. A PBF CDS technical meeting is scheduled to be held alongside the meeting of the Northern Committee-IATTC Joint Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna Management (JWG), and a draft is expected to be presented at that meeting.
9. A PAC member supported the previous PAC members’ statements and noted he heard that Japan has postponed the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) meeting so it would not be a surprise if the JWG meeting ends up being postponed, held virtually and/or shortened. He also voiced their support for moving MSE for PBF up on the priority list.
10. A Commissioner stated she is in conversations with the Chair of the Northern Committee (NC), and no decisions have been made about the meetings at this time.
  - c. *North Pacific striped marlin*
11. NOAA noted that the U.S. proposed rebuilding plan was adopted by the Commission in December (2019) and that the United States would like to revisit the CMM to ensure the

stock is rebuilt in accordance with the new plan. NC had requested some additional information from the ISC Billfish working group and NOAA understands the working group has developed responses to the request, although they have not been shared yet. NOAA emphasized again how it is unsure how COVID-19 may affect planned meetings, but the United States is exploring options for revising the CMM. NOAA also is considering advice from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, which recently sent recommendations from its March meetings, for example to use phased reductions in catches. NOAA welcomed feedback from the PAC on options for revising the CMM.

12. A PAC member asked NOAA to clarify whether it has received information from the ISC on the most probable recruitment scenario. Additionally, the member noted that the Council recommendation on phased reductions is important and should be considered thoroughly before the United States engages in discussions with other countries. He suggested analytical work could include using both recruitment scenarios to see how the stock would react to implementation of phased reductions. A PAC member expressed support for the consideration of phased catch reductions and as well as a potential request to the ISC to investigate whether further analysis on recruitment scenarios is possible.
13. NOAA thanked the PAC member for their suggestions. NOAA is unsure as to whether the ISC will be willing to run additional scenarios, however, NOAA's scientists at PIFSC may be able to contribute some additional work if necessary.
14. A member of the public noted the Council has engaged in conversations with PIFSC on the potential of a medium recruitment scenario, the concept of phased catch reductions and exploring different stock boundaries.
15. NOAA thanked the member of the public and inquired whether there was a preference in an approach to phased catch reductions (i.e. slowly or quickly) and what scenarios should be explored. NOAA noted the current 15-year timeframe to rebuild the stock.
16. The member of the public cited examples he has seen in other fisheries. For example, start out with a stepwise, wherein every 3 years catch is reduced by X percent. A continual decrease may be less realistic. He suggested it may be necessary to look at new scientific information every few years as it becomes available to better understand the maximum possible reduction and work backwards from that point. Someone from the Hawaii Longline Association (HLA) or ISC may be better equipped to suggest a proposed way forward for a phased reduction.
17. Another PAC member stated he would like to see which of the two recruitment scenarios is more likely in the near term, to understand the level of impact it would have on the fishery and how best to achieve that in the rebuilding timeframe.
18. Several PAC members noted the importance of clarity in considering a phased approach and suggested that success will be determined by implementation and compliance. They noted that PIFSC and ISC have said recent recruitment is more likely to occur than the

long-term historical average, but could consider the long-term recruitment scenario as a weighting factor.

19. NOAA stated that in the current CMM, the focus is on catch limits. It asked the PAC for feedback as to what options may be feasible for NOAA to explore for inclusion in a revised CMM for example, other gear modifications or release of live fish.
20. A PAC member thanked NOAA for its leadership on the rebuilding plan and noted that PIFSC and ISC are providing good information to work through this. She expressed interest in looking at CMMs that are not solely based on catch, but other measures to reduce catch. For example, a paper (about 10 years old) looked at hook removals, J hooks versus circle hooks, and a number of other potential mitigation strategies. There were findings relevant to this discussion, such as looking at removal of the shallowest hooks and release of live fish. This PAC member expressed interest in exploring these two mitigation strategies in particular, as they could be important ways to reduce catch and rebuild stocks without just having a catch limit.
21. Another PAC member noted a previous comment regarding compliance and monitoring. He noted a lack of confidence that foreign fisheries would comply with gear restrictions, so would not support the removal of shallowest hooks. This PAC member supports the use of circle hooks as a mitigation strategy.

*d. South Pacific albacore*

22. NOAA summarized the status of the WCPFC working group on South Pacific albacore which produced a draft work plan at the Commission meeting in Port Moresby. Notably, the working group co-chairs have not communicated with members since the Commission meeting, presumably due to COVID-19 and one of the co-Chairs leaving Fiji's fisheries ministry. One of the United States' main objectives is to maintain fishing opportunities for participants in the U.S. South Pacific albacore fisheries. There is no update as to what the working group hopes to achieve this year but NOAA welcomes any input and feedback on this work.
23. A PAC member asked if NOAA would be open to adding MSE to the working group's work plan.
24. NOAA responded that it was its understanding that MSE was included in the various iterations of the draft work plan for the working group presented at WPCFC16 and the final draft has not been recirculated.
25. Another PAC member provided information on the number of U.S. vessels targeting South Pacific albacore in the recent years and highlighted that the number of vessels is likely to increase slightly next year. It was noted that even with an increase, the number of vessels will still be below the U.S. vessel limit included in the WCPFC measure. This member state that the South Pacific troll fishery is becoming increasingly important for the U.S. fleet, so it should remain a priority for the United States to be involved in upcoming South Pacific albacore working group meetings scheduled for the margins of the Scientific Committee (SC) and the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC).

26. NOAA thanked the PAC member for the information and providing input into the draft work plan during Commission meeting. NOAA appreciates input as this issue progresses and noted that as the working group continues, the PAC can expect a similar level of communication as in the past – consideration for input on documents as they are distributed at Commission and subsidiary body meetings.
27. Another PAC member stated their concerns with the declining fisheries in American Samoa and the impact it has had on their boats fishing for South Pacific albacore. He requested NMFS to help with this issue and wanted the United States Government to be aware of the situation.

*e. Compliance Monitoring Scheme*

28. NOAA summarized that at WCPFC16, the Commission adopted a revised CMM for a two year time period which includes an ambitious plan for future work. The TCC Vice-Chair (Robert Day) is supposed to be leading an intersessional working group to guide the work of some smaller working groups on individual pieces of this future work. So far, there has been no progress, which is disappointing.
29. A PAC member asked if the measure is in place for this year only and whether the Commission needs to adopt a new one after December. NOAA replied this is a two year measure, so no need for adoption this year.
30. Another PAC member thanked NOAA for the update and agreed that it was disappointing how little intersessional work has been done but he is hopeful that there will be progress made in the interim and at the annual meeting.
31. A member of the public noted she is interested in being involved in these conversations as things progress. She thanked the United States for involving her organization last year and look forward to working with the United States on this issue moving forward. NOAA thanked the member of the public and welcomed her assistance.

*f. Regional Observer Programme*

32. NOAA reviewed an ongoing U.S. objective, which is to improve the flow of observer reports from Regional Observer Programme (ROP) providers to CCMs to conduct investigations. The Parties to the Nauru Agreement continue to block development of a minimum standard under the ROP to establish procedures for requesting observer reports and responding to requests. The Commission directed the TCC working group to pursue two other avenues: (1) improve the tracking scheme for requests and responses; and (2) determine if there is a way to minimize the number of false positive indications put in the Gen-3 form for pre-notification. NOAA identified key steps for this year, including continuing to lead the working group, and in particular, pursue those two tracks. Given the frustrations about the lack of progress, the United States intends to signal to the TCC and Commission that given the lack of utility of the ROP for the purpose of compliance, the Commission should stop relying on observers to ensure compliance with obligations. For example, the seasonal fish aggregating device (FAD) closure was part of the rationale for the 100% observer requirement for the purse seine fishery. The United States intends

to emphasize that if CCMs cannot rely on ROP reports to ensure compliance, the Commission should not adopt measures which rely on observers to measure compliance. NOAA welcomes input from the PAC on these ideas.

33. A PAC member suggested there is a connection to transshipment, which was discussed last year. He asked if there was any ability to update the ROP to ensure the reports are sent directly to the Secretariat, since record keeping has been an issue. The member encouraged better information sharing between WCPFC and NPFC to determine how to strengthen WCPFC's transshipment regulations.
34. NOAA thanked the PAC member for their input and noted that firming up the Commission's data requirements and protocols for observing transshipments is an explicit task on the TCC work plan. There is flexibility as to whether this is taken up in the ROP or transshipment working groups or by the United States. NOAA noted the member's comment on cross-RFMO communication.
35. Another PAC member asked NOAA a question regarding U.S. transshipment regulations. NOAA thanked the member for their question and noted that being a regulatory question, it would best be dealt with outside the PAC.

*g. At-sea transshipment*

36. There were no discussions on this topic.

**Agenda Item 3 – Tropical Tunas (CMM 2018-01)**

37. Referring to the draft U.S. WCPFC 2020 priorities document, NOAA summarized five key steps for this year. However, NOAA noted another issue in play: the skipjack tuna target reference point (TRP). Last year, the Pacific Islands Fisheries Forum Agency (FFA) shared a proposal to change the way the TRP is expressed, linking it more directly to reference years or fishing conditions. The SC is expected to advise this year on the issue. Regarding the key steps, no workplan was adopted for tropical tunas in 2019 but rather, an extended Commission meeting was agreed upon to allow more time to negotiate this subject. The United States had proposed a set of information to be requested from the scientific services provider regarding longline bigeye tuna catch limits and purse seine fishing effort limits, but it was not adopted. Given that there will be new stock assessments discussed at the SC, NOAA intends to put the proposal through the SC, but welcomes input from the PAC.
38. NOAA reminded the PAC that three U.S. concept proposals were put to WCPFC16, and although they were not adopted, the United States intends to continue to work with them. Once the information necessary to convert impact-on-spawning stock biomass to catches is available, the longline proposal can be fully fleshed out. In addition to the proposals on longline and purse seine limits, there is a proposal to treat the meaning of FADs sets differently for the purpose of FAD closures and limits. NOAA stated that the United States also will continue to explore ways to mitigate adverse impacts on American Samoa.



39. The Chair thanked NOAA for its overview and suggested comments and questions regarding each subject be discussed under their specific agenda items.

*a. Longline bigeye tuna catch limits*

40. A PAC member summarized the outcome of the discussion on this proposal from the in-person meeting of the PAC, in October 2019. The PAC requested at that time that NOAA provide example scenarios using numbers in the longline concept paper, and to withhold submission to the Commission in December; however, the United States submitted the proposal. The member recognized that the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) has not provided advice on numbers yet, but asked if NOAA had made any progress with their example scenarios and how this related to the reference points and U.S. interests. Additionally, the PAC member asked whether and how the PAC members and industry have a role in the workplan and communicating with FFA and Commission regarding information requests. It is important to the member to see actual numbers and would like to be involved in evaluating the proposal.

41. NOAA thanked the PAC member for their thoughts. NOAA noted that until it has outputs from the science provider, it is unable to flesh out the proposal however, it is happy to provide hypotheticals. At the PAC meeting in October, NOAA provided examples of a scenario. NOAA requests input from the PAC on proposals, especially on the balance between the longline and purse seine fisheries. If the PAC has particular feedback on the information request, that would also be welcomed and helpful.

42. The PAC member clarified if the information requested is reliant on the new bigeye tuna stock assessment being completed, that will be available in August.

43. A member of the public suggested that the United States be prepared with a target for uncertainty in order to provide clear guidance and ensure efficient communication when in discussions with the SSC for future stochastic models to predict median bias levels.

44. NOAA thanked the member of the public and agreed this is what the United States is suggesting in the current proposal it intends to submit. NOAA suggested the PAC members look at the proposals and let NOAA know if there are shortcomings or details to add.

45. A member of the PAC agreed with a previous statement that targets for both bigeye and yellowfin tuna should be established first, even if they are interim targets. This information is important for managers so they can fully engage in the process and understand the implications of various quotas.

46. NOAA replied that several people have mentioned the need for a TRP. NOAA noted that the proposals would work with or without TRPs; in other words, a TRP is not necessarily needed to formulate a bigeye tuna total allowable catch for the longline fishery.

47. The member of the PAC replied he thinks it would be a more precautionary approach to go through the process to adopt an interim TRP and if the information needed to set a final TRP is unavailable, there will be some initial parameters to test, at a minimum.

48. NOAA noted the PAC member's suggestion. NOAA emphasized that there could be risk associated with agreeing to an interim TRP in order to have the proposal move forward; that is, it could slow the proposal down. NOAA stated it can proceed on the proposal as written, with or without TRP, whether interim or not. However, NOAA understands the PAC member's emphasis on the value of an adopted TRP.

49. The Chair agreed with the statements made by the PAC members: it is important that the PAC and industry are able to work with NOAA on developing the proposal. The Chair asked NOAA if there has been any further outreach or communications since WCPFC16 with the other WCPFC members.

50. NOAA answered the only communications have been from PIRO, asking the FFA and PNA whether they would like to collaborate in formulating an information request to inform the tropical tuna discussions. There was not a positive response. There has been correspondence with the Secretariat but not with other non-FFA members yet.

*b. Purse seine fishing effort limits*

51. No comments or questions.

*c. FAD management*

52. NOAA emphasized that the FAD "definition" proposal is not related to the two tasks the Commission has given itself in the tropical tunas proposal, and that we pursued it last year in collaboration with Korea, which has similar interests. NOAA welcomes input from the PAC on how important this is in the scheme of the measure as a whole and whether the United States should continue to pursue it.

53. A Commissioner inquired whether there have been any communications with Korea, and whether NOAA is going to bring this up again or if it are working on something as well. NOAA answered it has not been in touch yet but seems reasonable to reach out soon. The Commissioner noted there has been opposition but agrees that the United States should reach out to Korea to see if they have continued to work on this or reached out to other members.

**Agenda Item 4 – Participating Territories issues**

54. NOAA provided an overview of this agenda item. This is an opportunity for territory representatives to raise any issues. NOAA does not have any particular issues to bring up on the call, but regarding South Pacific albacore, as discussed under the previous agenda item, NOAA understands this topic is very important for American Samoa. NOAA also is trying to be mindful of the impacts of the pandemic on the U.S. territories and the impacts on the industry. NOAA is working on providing relief to the territory governments and would like to hear any input from the territories at this time on any other issues.

55. A member of the PAC thanked NOAA and the Council for providing assistance to American Samoa's fisheries but noted continued concerns about the U.S. territorial

waters and fishing activities. This member noted that American Samoa fisheries have not received any funds yet to assist with their economic hardships and would like more assistance figuring out the next steps forward.

56. NOAA responded that it is continuing to work on domestic issues including providing support for the proposed diversification of fisheries for American Samoa's fleet. The CARES Act provides economic relief for states and territories that have fishing industries, and American Samoa will be provided a portion of those funds. However, the CARES Act economic relief allocation is not yet known, including which fisheries industries may qualify for assistance. In addition, NOAA noted it has received a request from the industry to consider moving forward on the Council's amendment on the American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area (LVPA), which has resulted in a lawsuit and subsequent appeal. NOAA is waiting for a decision from the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit but is still determining the best way forward regarding the LVPA. Finally, NOAA emphasized that U.S. fishing vessels continue to have full access to the U.S. EEZ surrounding American Samoa and the United States has worked with countries, including through diplomatic channels to address past incursions into the U.S. EEZ boundary.

#### **Agenda Item 5 – PAC meetings**

##### *a. Future PAC conference calls*

57. NOAA acknowledged the request for another PAC teleconference in July, 2020. The PAC can expect to receive communications from NOAA regarding the logistics for the next meeting. NOAA noted the current PAC membership does not expire until August 2021 and NOAA will be producing a summary report from the meeting today that PAC members will have the opportunity to review, in the next month.

##### *b. October PAC meeting*

58. NOAA announced the October PAC meeting will be held from October 15-16, 2020, in Honolulu, Hawaii, at the Alohilani Resort.
59. The Chair thanked NOAA and noted he is in support of having another teleconference in July to prepare for the October meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 6 – Other business**

##### *a. Crew labor standards*

60. NOAA provided a brief update on the subject, noting it is an issue that has continued to gain attention and traction since WCPFC adopted a non-binding resolution on labor standards a couple of years ago. This topic is very important to NOAA and the United States and they are continuing to have internal discussions on putting forward a proposal for a CMM in various RFMOs, specifically considering forced labor in the fishing industry. We have not yet put together a full draft for review, but NOAA wanted to notify the PAC about this idea and receive any feedback. NOAA suggested PAC members start by looking at the current non-binding resolution and think about how that measure may

be turned into a binding one. NOAA noted some PAC members were involved in negotiations for the non-binding measures as well, but since it has been a couple of years, NOAA would like to revisit thoughts on progressing this issue.

61. A PAC member asked for clarification on whether NOAA is looking for interested PAC members to voice concerns on this issue or whether it was looking for information on efforts that have been underway in the U.S. fleets.
62. NOAA replied that initially it wanted to make the PAC aware and seek input on the potential for a proposed measure. If there is sufficient interest in discussing efforts in the U.S. fleets, a conference call with several people may be productive and NOAA is open to ways to discuss further.
63. The PAC member described what has been done in the Hawaii longline fishery. He voiced concern that when the non-binding resolution on labor standards was discussed years before, there were some CCMs that viewed this as an issue outside of WCPFC's purview. He was unclear as to why the United States would now be seeking binding measures and asked if the United States has heard if other countries are looking at binding measures as well, or if this is something the United States is looking at developing unilaterally.
64. NOAA answered that it is viewing this as being the forced labor issue, in particular, and it has numerous connections with IUU fishing. In the larger U.S. efforts to combat IUU fishing, crew labor standards are of importance and cannot be ignored. Looking at other RFMOs and whether binding measures could be adopted at RFMOs is part of the overarching U.S. strategy to address the issue. The United States has heard there are other countries interested in pushing towards binding measures, FFA members for example, but at this time it is unclear whether WCPFC members are going to be willing to act on it. NOAA noted statistics regarding forced labor in the seafood industry and emphasized the need to look at what can be accomplished across all tuna RFMOs on this subject, in addition to understanding what the private industry is already doing to overcome this issue. NOAA also provided an example of what Bumble Bee tuna has implemented for tracing their fish back to a vessel for consumer knowledge.
65. NOAA further noted the work that the Hawaii longline fleet has done on this subject, and suggested additional input from the HLA would be helpful. The HLA may be able to provide a model of sorts for what the United States wants to do with other fleets, given all of their hard work on this issue.
66. The PAC member noted he would be happy to engage with NOAA on this subject, recognizing the importance for the United States to address and eliminate forced labor in seafood supply chains. He shared the Food and Agricultural Organization has recently drafted guidelines but had received pushback from some seafood organizations. The member suggested that NOAA not reinvent the wheel, as a lot of work has already been done on this subject and also recognize this is moving into larger issues than just tuna measures, therefore it is important to retain focus on basic measures the United States needs to accomplish this year, such as tropical tunas.

67. NOAA stressed that the human atrocity aspect should be the first and foremost important issue addressed, but in the competitive aspect for the U.S. fleet, forced labor is an uneven playing field for the United States. NOAA noted that foreign fleets have varied operating costs and slave labor, which can contribute to overfishing.
68. Another PAC member shared their concern with NOAA over the foreign crew member's inability to leave the vessels at port and how that has affected the American Samoa economy and fleets. He inquired about using specific fishermen as crew members. NOAA answered it will be happy to follow up with this PAC member after the meeting to discuss the details of the situation.
69. A PAC member thanked NOAA for the forewarning of this subject matter. He noted the implications for Marine Stewardship Council certifications and U.S. vessels that have foreign crews. He requested to work further with other PAC members and NOAA on this subject matter and ask for an update on the U.S. government agency task force that looked into this last year.
70. NOAA answered yes; there was a Department of Justice (DOJ) task force formed, but it was sidelined for almost a year. It was recently resumed and they expect to have a full report sent to agencies for full review and clearance in the near future. The PAC member asked if the industry will have an opportunity to view this report and provide feedback. NOAA answered no; the input the industry provided last December was the last one. The draft is for U.S. government review only and will not be able to be shared. DOJ is running this process.

*b. COVID-19*

71. NOAA summarized two issues related to the recent COVID-19 pandemic. First, NOAA is working closely on tracking impacts on international meetings and contingency planning the possibility of postponed or virtual meetings. The first WCPFC-related meetings, the PBF JWG and ISC plenary meetings were already mentioned and are still scheduled at this time for July; ISC has planned to meet virtually already with limited participation. In August and September, the SC, NC, and TCC meetings are set to occur, but there are no firm plans yet as to how they will occur, and NOAA will learn about this when the public does, unless the Secretariat decides to consult with the United States first. Second, fisheries have been greatly affected by the pandemic, in the longline, purse seine, and other sectors. There have been a couple of decisions in the Commission to temporarily waive requirements through May 31, 2020, including one to waive the 100 percent observer requirement for purse seine vessels and a second to waive the prohibition on purse seine transshipments at sea. A third decision, still under debate, would waive the requirements for all at-sea transshipments to be observed.
72. The Chair noted no members had comments, and thanked everyone for attending the call, NMFS for preparing the information, and all discussions held. The Chair noted there is still a lot of work to be accomplished before the annual meeting in December, and that for the July meeting, it would be helpful to have some more concrete things to discuss in terms of proposals. For tropical tuna proposals, we are waiting on more information, but

if NOAA could ensure this work continues, it will help the PAC stay prepared. NOAA will work on scheduling the July meeting and will provide us information about it when available.

## 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**

April 28, 2020, 10 am - 12 pm HST

#### **AGENDA**

1. Brief overview of WCPFC16 and any relevant follow-on information
2. U.S. priorities for WCPFC in 2020
  - a. Tropical tunas (see agenda item 3)
  - b. Pacific bluefin tuna
  - c. North Pacific striped marlin
  - d. South Pacific albacore
  - e. Compliance Monitoring Scheme
  - f. Regional Observer Programme
  - g. At-sea transshipment
3. Tropical tunas (CMM 2018-01)
  - a. Longline bigeye tuna catch limits
  - b. Purse seine fishing effort limits
  - c. FAD management
4. Participating Territories issues
5. PAC meetings
  - a. Future PAC conference calls
  - b. October PAC meeting
6. Other business
  - a. Crew labor standards
  - b. COVID-19

### ATTACHMENT 3 – Draft of 2020 U.S. Priorities

**Top-priority:**

Issue	2020 Objective	Notes	Key steps
Tropical tunas	<p>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:</p> <p>1) See adoption of favorable allocation decisions for BET catches in longline (p44) and purse seine fishing effort on the high seas (p28).                      2) See agreement to evaluate effects of alternative FAD definition/restrictions (p18).</p>	<p>CMM 2018-01 is in effect through 2020; the small-garbage FAD provision expired at the end of 2019 (p18).</p>	<p>a. After reaching out to FFA, send letter to the Commission requesting specific information needed for allocation exercise.                      b. Consider development of proposal setting and allocating BET LL TAC.                      c. Consider development of proposal for allocation of transferable PS fishing effort limits.                      d. Prepare proposal to evaluate effects of alternative FAD definition/restrictions.                      e. Continue to explore ways to mitigate adverse impacts of limits on American Samoa.</p>
Pacific bluefin tuna	<p>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.</p>	<p>ISC conducting a stock assessment for PBF in 2020. JWG meeting scheduled for late July in Fukuoka, Japan</p>	<p>a. Informal outreach with Japan and other countries.</p>
NP striped marlin	<p>Revise the CMM to adopt exploitation controls that will rebuild stock within the rebuilding plan parameters</p>	<p>ISC to provide advice to WCPFC on recruitment scenarios.</p>	<p>a. Develop draft revised CMM.                      b. Informal outreach with FFA, Japan, Taiwan, Korea and China</p>
SP albacore	<p>Active engagement through the roadmap WG for South Pacific</p>	<p>SP albacore roadmap to hold two face-to-face meetings, a one day meeting prior to</p>	<p>a. At SPC head of fisheries, have a small meeting on margins to meet with SP Albacore</p>

	albacore.	SC, and a one day meeting immediately following TCC	south Pacific countries b. Coordinate with American Samoa officials
Compliance Monitoring Scheme	<p>1) Continue to participate in the CMS process and work to ensure that is a fair and meaningful process.</p> <p>2) Participate in the CMS IWG to progress the CMS future work plan: development of audit points; improvements to case file system; development of risk-based assessment framework; development of corrective actions for instances of non-compliance; and development of guidelines for participation of observers.</p> <p>3) Continue to push for a more permanent CMS measure which includes a mechanism for responses to non-compliance.</p>	WCPFC16 agreed to establish a CMS Intersessional Working Group, Chaired by Robert Day (Canada), to continue intersessional work on the CMS Workplan	<p>a. Review and provide comments on US dCMR when provided and be prepared to address any areas on US potential compliance issues identified.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>c. Be prepared to provide updates on any outstanding Investigation Status issues from past assessments.</p> <p>d. Participate in the CMS IWG to develop audit points &amp; begin work on a risk-based framework</p> <p>e. Support development of a list of obligations to be reviewed in 2021, which includes review of bycatch measures</p>
Regional Observer Programme	See substantial improvements to the flow of observer reports from ROP Providers to flag Members for investigations.	PNA blocked adoption of an ROP standard on the sharing of observer reports at TCC15. The TCC WG will continue work in 2020.	<p>a. Lead WG to develop recommendations to TCC16, focusing on improving tracking requests and responses, and improving pre-screening of observer reports to minimize false-positives.</p> <p>b. Consider provocative proposals on ROP and ROP-dependent CMMs to stimulate movement on this issue.</p>
At-sea transshipment	<p>1) Further develop guidelines for allowing at-sea transshipment and explore implications of further restrictions on at-sea transshipment.</p> <p>2) Strengthen implementation of existing regulatory scheme, particularly in making use of pre-transshipment notifications and transshipment declarations for</p>	USA is co-lead, with RMI, the IWG on review of the transshipment measure.	<p>a. Work with Secretariat to develop mechanism to facilitate dissemination of notifications and declarations to MCS entities when requested.</p> <p>b. Identify non data elements of CMM 2009-06 to be revised in 2020.</p>

	enforcement. 3) Explore EM applications for monitoring transshipment at sea.		
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**Medium-priority:**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>2020 objective</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Key steps</b>
Budget	Work with intersessional working group.	Cook Islands is spearheading the intersessional review of Secretariat salaries.	
Charters	Make progress on dealing with the effects of vessels chartered by SIDS.	WPFC16 agreed that SC, TCC and the Commission should continue to consider improvements to charter notification requirements and/or the treatment of chartered vessels in the WCPFC more generally.	a. Get a better handle on status and dynamics of charters and how they influence CMM effectiveness. b. support review of the effectiveness of the current charter notification scheme/management of charters more generally
eR and eM	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. FAD MO WG to hold a meeting alongside SC16 at a date to be determined.	
Harvest strategies	See progress on harvest strategy elements, particularly for southern LL, tropical LL, and tropical PS.	For 2020, harvest strategy workplan lists: SP ALB: SC provide advice on performance of potential management procedures (MPs), TCC consider implications of potential MPs, and Commission consider advice on progress towards MPs SKJ: SC provide advice on performance of candidate management procedures (MPs), TCC consider implications of candidate MPs, and Commission consider and refine a candidate set of MPs	

		BET and YFT: Commission provide guidance on desirable fishery conditions to inform TRP.	
IUU Vessel List			a. Participate in routine listing procedures. b. continue to consider options for cross-listing procedures
Marine mammals	Adopt best handling practices for the safe release of cetaceans, improve understanding of the impacts of fishing on cetaceans in the Convention Area, and support adoption of a stronger cetacean CMM which applies to both purse seine and longline interactions.	At WCPFC16, Korea proposed modifications to the current cetacean CMM (2011-03) to include requirements for longline fisheries. Japan was unwilling to adopt the modifications without further advice from SC	a. Support the development and review of best handling practices for cetaceans at SC16 b. Support SPC review of available data to provide estimates of fishery interaction types and levels with cetaceans, for review by the SC
Overlap area	1) Identify opportunities to improve implementation of IATTC-WCPFC agreement. 2) Support AS office to facilitate smooth cross-endorsement of observer placements and trips.	Declarations of CCMs to the WCPFC on which RFMO measures apply in overlap area are available (WCPFC13) but incomplete. Declarations to IATTC don't appear to be available on the IATTC website, but are available in various circulars and meeting minutes from the WCPFC.	a. Request list of overlap notifications from CCMs, from Secretariat.
Port State measures	Support Embassy and HQ engagement with PICs interested in acceding to PSMA		
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.
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	a. Continue to track Project 93 and development of observer data collection elements for transshipment - consider proposing modifications to the ROP MSDF to TCC15. b. Track implementation of CMM 2018-04. c. Consider development of a proposal to further expand CMM 2018-04 in 2021.

		development of observer data collection elements for transshipment.	
SIDS issues	1) Improve efforts to cooperate with SIDS and consult on proposals for disproportionate burden implications. 2) Strengthen USG coordination in PIC fisheries development.	AT SPC HOF, USAID rolling out \$14 million MOU with SPC. Will focus on coastal fisheries and economic development.	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 tuna treaty consultation. b. Host USG interagency PIC fisheries development coordination meeting in HNL, Spring 2020. Will include State, USAID, DOI, and PIRO.
Vessel Monitoring System			a. Terry to lead VMS intersessional WG

**Continuing priority – no identified 2020 action**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>2020 objective</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Key steps</b>
Catch Documentation Scheme	Continue to engage in the development of a WCPFC catch documentation scheme.		a. Review and provide feedback to FFA on any draft measures or other documentations related to the WCPDC CDS. b. Participate in any electronic or in-person meetings relating to the CDS working group.
Data	Improve the quality and quantity of fisheries data held and used by the Commission.		
High Seas Boarding and Inspection Scheme			
Crew labor standards			
Marine debris/pollution			a. Explore opportunities for ALDFG harmonization in RFMOs.
New members	Continue to push for a process for interested and eligible CNMs to become full members.	FFA members continue to strongly oppose new membership as well as the development of a formal process for	United States could consider reaching out to other supportive members to try to progress the issue in advance of WCPFC17.

		accession. Other members (Japan, EU, China, Chinese Taipei) have been supportive of the U.S. position to develop a process and to support new membership.	
NP Albacore	Contribute to MSE progress.	NP albacore MSE work on hold until after new stock assessment is completed. Potential MSE meeting in late 2020 or early 2021.	
NP Swordfish		Next stock assessment scheduled for 2022	