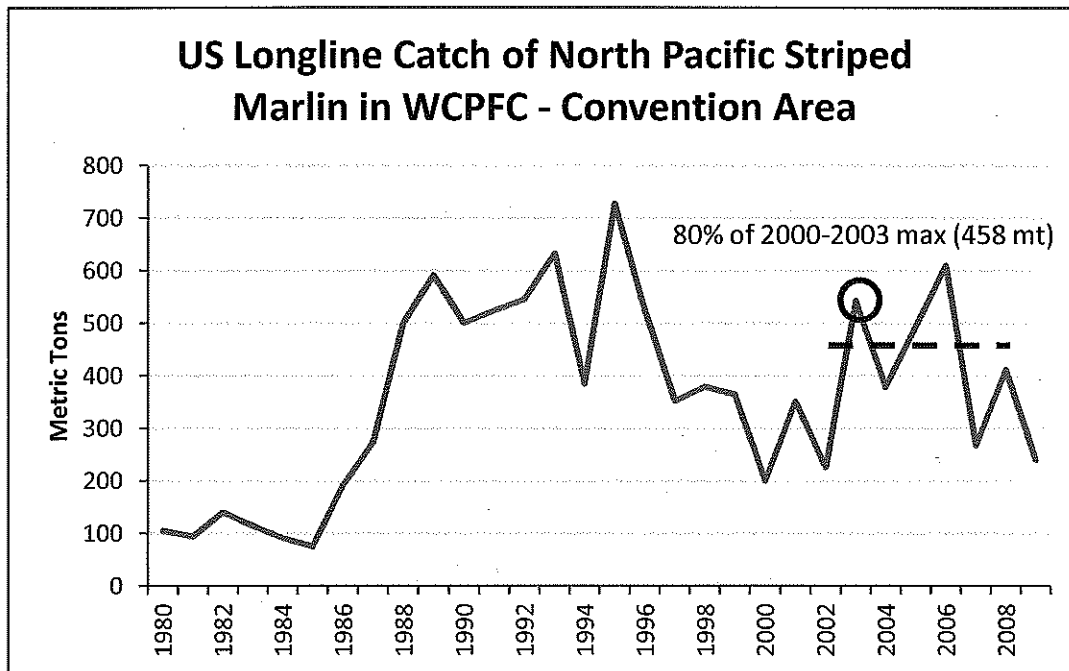


North –Pacific Striped Marlin Catch Limit

The Seventh Meeting of the WCPFC adopted CMM 2010-01, which required CCMs to reduce total catches of North Pacific Striped Marlin in a phased reduction such that by 1 January 2013 the catch is 80% of the levels caught in 2000 to 2003.

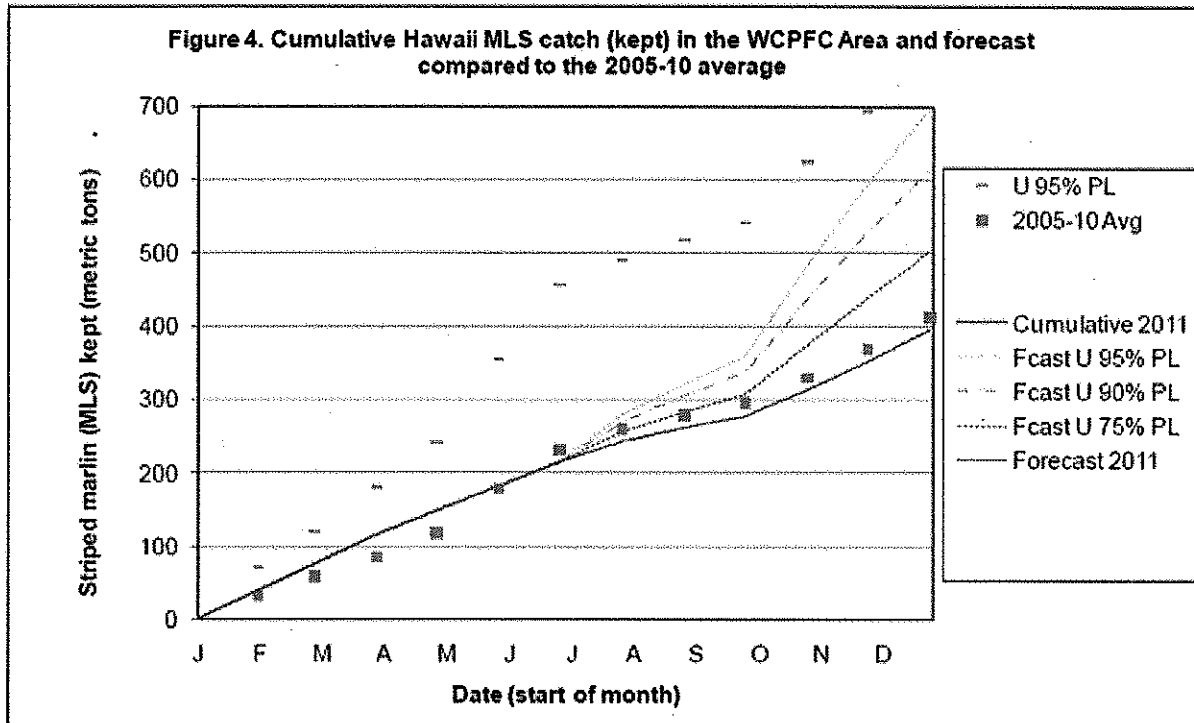
US historical longline catches of striped marlin in the WCPFC North Pacific have ranged between 200-700 mt. Applying CMM 2010-01 to the period 2000-2003, where the maximum catch was 573 mt, produces a 2013 catch limit of 458 mt (see below).



There was no stock assessment completed for North Pacific striped marlin in 2011 presented at the Scientific Committee Seventh Meeting (SC7). At SC7 CCMs expressed both their concern over the status of the northern striped marlin stock and their disappointment that the planned ISC stock assessment for north Pacific striped marlin had not been completed to date, which was largely due to delays in data submission by ISC members. They further called into question the ability of the ISC process to deliver on this issue. They subsequently recommended that the SPC-OFP as science providers to the Commission be tasked with undertaking a new stock assessment in 2012 as part of the work program of the SC. However, the NP striped marlin assessment is planned to be completed and presented at ISC12, scheduled for July 2012, and the assessment will be presented at Scientific Committee Eighth Meeting (SC8)

The US catch of striped marlin is being monitored in relation to the possibility that the US fishery (all gears combined) might reach a total catch level equal to the 2000-2003 maximum annual catch (573 mt) in the WCPFC Area reduced by 10% (516 mt). A forecast similar to those conducted for BET and YFT (above) was based on 2005-2010 monthly catch data. The forecast

indicates the striped marlin catch that might be reached by the end of the year but with considerable uncertainty (see figure below). Average weight data for 2011 indicate that striped marlin were much smaller than in 2005-2010.



At its 151 Meeting the Council adopted the following recommendation with respect to striped marlin:

The Council recommended NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) apprise NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) on a quarterly basis of the North Pacific striped marlin cumulative catch by weight in the WCPFC convention area from the Hawaii-based longline fishery. The Council also recommends that HDAR provide to PIRO a similar quarterly catch total of striped marlin for non-longline pelagic fisheries.

The Council recommended NMFS PIFSC conduct the following analyses to help develop management options for North Pacific striped marlin, should any be needed,:

- a. Using Hawaii longline observer data, summarize the number of striped marlin based on condition (dead or alive) upon retrieval by associated sizes.
- b. Using Hawaii dealer data, examine the market values of striped and blue marlin size categories to ascertain the economic impacts to the fisheries if a minimum size category were implemented.

- c. Examine the effects on the amounts of retained catches in Hawaii based fisheries of (a) striped marlin and (b) striped and blue marlin combined in the North Pacific of the WCPFC area, if live boated fish smaller than specified minimum sizes were required to be released. The analysis would examine various possible minimum sizes including no minimum size.**

The first part of this recommendation has been included in the catch updates for bigeye and yellowfin tuna catch in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) as noted above. NMFS PIFSC has indicated that the Science Center will complete an analysis to estimate the economic impact associated with releasing live catch of marlins from the longline fishery. The analysis will provide information on changes in longline catch composition and resultant ex-vessel value that could result from live-release of marlin by size categories. PIFSC has indicated that it will work with Council staff to generate the minimum size scenarios that will form the basis of the analysis. PIFSC will seek to provide a draft analysis by the March 2012 SSC meeting.

The 108th SSC and 152nd Council Meeting may wish to consider other recommendations with respect to striped marlin, noting that the WCPO stock assessment and other analyses as outlined above will not be available until 2012.

