

## Key points from Science Committee 11

- SPC presented its annual overview of tuna catch in the WCPO. In 2014, total tuna catch was 2,860,648 mt, which was a record high catch.
- Overall catches of skipjack (1,957,693 mt) and yellowfin (608,807 mt) were the highest on record, and overall catches of bigeye (161,299 mt) and albacore (132,849 mt) were relatively stable. The WCPO represented about 83% of catch from the Pacific and 60% of global tuna catch in 2014. Total value of the 2014 WCPO tuna catch was estimated to be nearly \$5.8 billion.
- The purse seine catch (2,020,627 mt) was the highest on record with a record high catch of skipjack (1,899,627 mt), the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest catch on record for yellowfin (362,049 mt), and the 6<sup>th</sup> highest catch on record for bigeye (67,367 mt). The number of purse seine vessels participating in the tropical fishery increased again to a record 302 vessels in 2014.
- Unassociated sets accounted for 66% of effort and 53% of catch in 2014 while drifting FAD sets accounted for 24% of effort and 37% of catch in 2014. CPUE of skipjack in 2014 was higher than average for the entire year whereas CPUE of yellowfin in 2014 was slightly below average in 2014. The total value of the purse seine catch in 2014 was \$3.17 billion (a 21% decrease in value from 2013 and the lowest value in the past three years), which is largely due to decreases in the price of skipjack and yellowfin in 2014.
- FFA noted that for the past two years prices of SKJ have declined following the FAD closures and then increased prior to the next year's FAD closure.
- Total catch of tunas by the longline fleet was 268,796 mt with 101,552 mt of yellowfin (highest for more than 10 years), 73,898 mt of bigeye (lowest since 1996), and 100,666 mt of albacore. (lowest since 2012) The total value of the longline catch in 2014 was almost \$1.68 billion, (an 18% increase from 2013).
- ROP longline coverage for data submitted to WCPFC is abysmal for most CCMs.
- The stock assessment theme reviewed two stock assessments, South Pacific albacore and North Pacific striped marlin and an indicator analysis for North Pacific shortfin mako shark.
- For S. Pacific albacore, recent levels of fishing mortality are lower than that which would support MSY ( $F_{\text{current}}/F_{\text{MSY}} = 0.39$ ), and recent levels of spawning biomass are above the level which would support MSY and 20% $SB_{F=0}$  ( $SB_{\text{latest}}/SB_{F=0} = 2.86$ ,  $SB_{\text{latest}}/SB_{\text{MSY}} = 0.4$ ).

- The ISC presented its north Pacific mako shark indicators and was unable to come up with any conclusions on stock status. The selected indices have conflicting trends, and the ISC hopes that additional data will allow for better assessment in 2018.
- ISC also presented its north Pacific striped marlin assessment, and similar to the previous stock assessment, recent levels of fishing mortality are higher than those that would support MSY ( $F_{2010-2012}/F_{MSY} = 1.49$ ), and recent levels of spawning biomass are lower than the level that would support MSY ( $SSB_{2013}/SSB_{MSY} = 0.39$ ).
- Pacific-wide bigeye sensitivity assessment was also presented during the stock assessment theme, and concluded that the dynamics of bigeye tuna in the WCPO using the Pacific-wide model are similar to those using a WCPO-only model (overfishing using MSY metrics and stock in a depleted state) and recommended that future assessments continue to use a WCPO-only model.
- SPC reviewed skipjack CPUE from several high latitude fisheries, and based on the data available, and there was no statistical evidence in support of SKJ range contraction.