



Resolution Adopted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council in Observance of the First Annual United Nations World Tuna Day

Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council was established by Congress in 1976 with authority over fisheries in the Pacific Ocean seaward of the state waters of the Territory of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Territory of Guam, the State of Hawai'i and the US Pacific Remote Islands Areas of Kingman Reef; Baker, Howland and Jarvis Islands; and Johnston, Midway, Palmyra and Wake Atolls;

Whereas Pacific Island communities have relied on tunas for millennia as a valuable food source and a cultural resource linking their traditional island lifestyle to the surrounding ocean and more recently as a major economic resource, with 60 percent of the global tuna harvests produced in their waters;

Whereas, in the US Pacific Islands, tuna and tuna-like species account for nearly 95 percent of the commercial catches, such that the port of Honolulu consistently ranks among the top 10 US fishing ports in terms of the value of seafood landings and provides the US with 80 percent of its domestic bigeye tuna and 50 percent of its domestic yellowfin tuna; American Samoa acquires 52 percent of its gross domestic product and the majority of its private-sector jobs from tuna fisheries and canneries; and Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands once supported major tuna transshipment facilities;

Whereas tuna and tuna-like species are also major non-commercial and subsistence fisheries throughout the US Pacific Islands and account for nearly 90 percent of the Hawai'i recreational catch by weight;

Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council since its inception advocated for the regulation of tunas and these efforts paid off in 1992 with the amendment that included tunas as managed species under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act;

Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has addressed potential social and ecosystem impacts of tuna longline fisheries by establishing longline prohibited areas 0 to 50 nautical miles (nm) around populated islands as well as around the unpopulated Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (i.e., the Protected Species Zone) in the early 1990s; by monitoring and enforcing these areas through pioneer use of the satellite-based vessel monitoring system (VMS), a best practice now used by fishing fleets globally; and by working with the fishing industry to develop longline gear and methods that significantly reduce sea turtle and seabird interactions;

Whereas the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council recognizes the importance of international cooperation in the conservation and management of tuna and organized the United States' hosting of the 4th, 5th, 6th and final Multi-lateral High Level Conference on Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific, which led to the Honolulu Convention adopted in 2000 and the establishment of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; and also organized and co-hosted the 2nd International Fishers Forum (IFF2) in Honolulu, IFF3 in Japan, IFF4 in Costa Rica and IFF5 in Taipei to share responsible fishing practices throughout the Pacific as well as the Parties to the Nauru Agreement Longline Vessel Day Scheme informational meeting and the Purse-Seine Bigeye Tuna Workshop in 2015;

Therefore, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council proudly accepts the United Nations General Assembly's invitation to observe May 2, 2017, as the first annual World Tuna Day, "in order to raise awareness of the value of tuna, the threats facing tuna populations, and the economic and social benefits of sustainably managed tuna stocks, and to share best practices in this regard";

Furthermore, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council encourages the Congressional Delegation, Governors, Mayors, County Councils, fishery and natural resources departments, fishing clubs and organizations, seafood industry, indigenous affairs offices, 'Aha Moku Councils, civic clubs and other agencies and organizations in Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to join in this observation; and requests that the US Departments of State and Commerce present the UN General Assembly with this resolution and the World Tuna Day poster produced by the Council for this occasion.

*Adopted by the voting members of the
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council
on the 24th Day of April 2017*