



March 3, 2023

Dear Council Members and Staff,

I have a few quick updates for you below. I will be on extended leave again from March 6 through mid-April, and so will not be joining the 194th meeting.

SPRFMO

I just returned from a very successful [SPRFMO meeting](#) at which U.S. leadership proved key to achieving improved monitoring and control of fishing in the South Pacific. There were five key outcomes:

- High seas boarding and inspection measure. After years of work SPRFMO adopted the U.S. proposal to establish comprehensive SPRFMO-specific high seas boarding and inspection procedures. This should enhance our MCS in the Convention Area.
- Jumbo Flying Squid. The commission voted to limit the number and tonnage of vessels flagged to China, Taiwan (participating as Chinese Taipei), and Korea that target squid in the eastern Pacific. Eastern Pacific developing coastal states were exempted. Increased observer coverage was initially included in the measure but was deferred to a subsequent commission after consensus could not be reached. The measure also preserves opportunities for new entrants into the fishery subject to the status of the stock and approval by the Commission.
- Climate Change. The commission adopted a U.S. proposal to incorporate climate change into SPRFMO scientific processes and decision-making.
- Bottom Fishing. Members adopted a measure to enhance the conservation of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the South Pacific and improve management of bottom fishing on the high seas.
- Jack mackerel. SPRFMO adopted a proposal on the allocation of jack mackerel that will strengthen management and sustainable use in the fishery for the next decade. The United States chaired the working group that developed the proposal.

BBNJ

The resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) is currently being held February 20 – March 3 in NY. While delegations made progress at IGC5, a number of key issues remained outstanding in the text. The Council may wish to reach out to the U.S. BBNJ team to find a time to make a presentation to the Council after the outcome is known.

Other

The Our Ocean Conference (OOC) is also [underway in Panama](#) from March 2 - 3 2023. The eighth Our Ocean Conference – hosted by the Government of Panama – convened governments, non-governmental organizations, and civil society to make concrete commitments to protect ocean health and security. [The United States made 77 announcements](#), from 8 agencies and offices, worth nearly USD 6 billion, more than twice as much as the United States pledged at last year's conference. Individual

commitments can be viewed here: <https://viewer.ouroceanconference.org/>. I would be happy to provide any further information that would be useful to the Council at the 195th meeting.

Sincerely,

C. Colin Brinkman
Office of Marine Conservation