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Implementation of ICCAT Recommendations for Atlantic Bluefin Tuna and Northern Albacore

HMS Advisory Panel Meeting

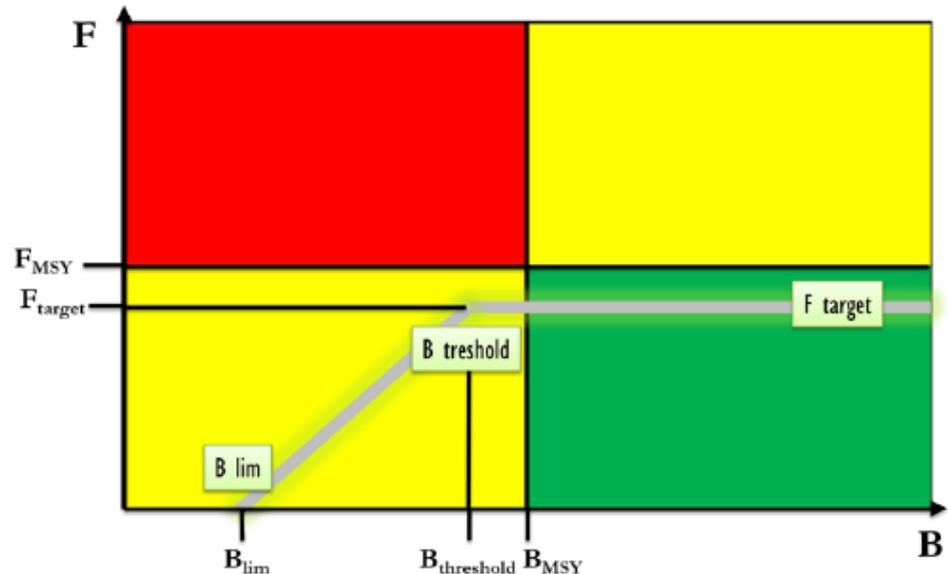
March 8, 2018

Outline

- First, some terminology:
 - Harvest control rule (HCR)
 - Management strategy evaluation (MSE)
- ICCAT's 2017 Recommendations re: temperate tunas
 - North Atlantic albacore (northern albacore) – Recommendation 17-04
 - Western Atlantic bluefin tuna – Recommendation 17-06
- Need for domestic rulemaking
- Comparison of the baseline Atlantic bluefin tuna quotas and subquotas under the current and recommended U.S. quota
- Considering addressing retention of shark-damaged tunas
- Anticipated timing

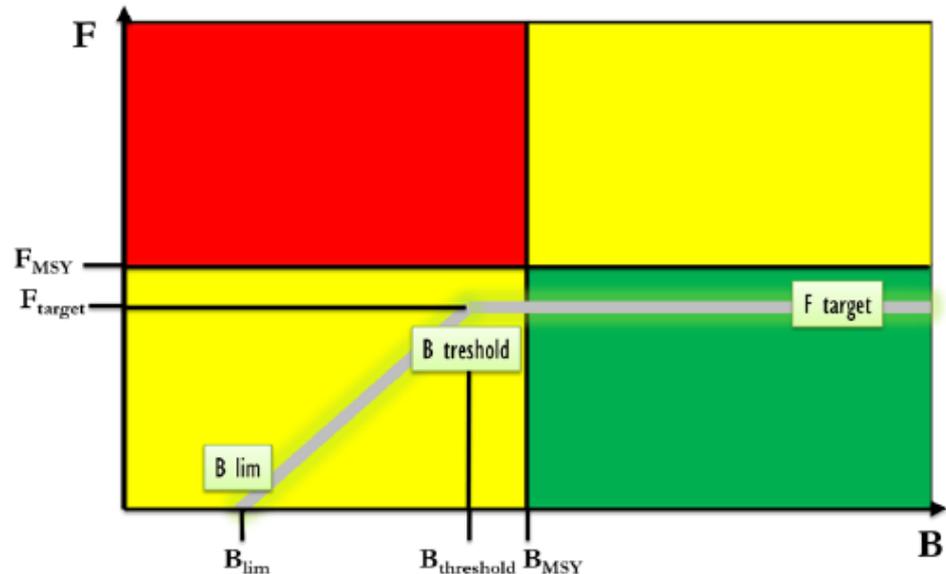
Harvest Control Rules and Management Strategy Evaluation

- ICCAT has been working toward the adoption of **harvest control rules** (HCRs) for priority stocks (northern albacore, swordfish, bluefin tuna, tropical tunas)
- HCRs implement **pre-agreed management actions** that will occur in response to various stock status and other performance indicators to help ensure identified management objectives are achieved
 - Objectives may include achieving the target reference point (e.g., B_{TARGET} or F_{TARGET}) and avoid the limit reference point (e.g., B_{LIM} , below which the sustainability of the stock may be in danger).
 - B_{TARGET} may be B_{MSY} .



Harvest Control Rules and Management Strategy Evaluation

- **Management strategy evaluation** (MSE) is an inclusive, interactive, and iterative process for evaluating the performance of potential HCRs and reference points in relation to management objectives, including the risk associated with not achieving those objectives
- ICCAT identified northern albacore as the pilot stock for this effort in 2015
- Relevant management objective: Maintain the northern albacore stock in the “green zone” with at least a 60% probability and maximize long-term yield
- **“Management procedures”** (sometimes called harvest strategies) *include* stock monitoring, harvest control rules, and management strategy evaluation.



ICCAT Rec 17-04: Northern Albacore HCR

- ICCAT adopted an HCR for northern albacore on an *interim basis*
- **Application of the HCR resulted in a TAC increase from 28,000 mt to 33,600 mt for each of 2018, 2019, and 2020**
 - Consistent with the stability clause of the HCR, which limits the TAC increase to 20%
 - **U.S. baseline quota increased from 527 mt to 632.4 mt**
- The SCRS will continue to develop the MSE over the 2018-2020 period, and the Commission will review the interim HCR in 2020 with a view to adopting a long-term management procedures at that point
- ICCAT plans to consolidate Recs 17-04 and 16-06 (which contained other elements of ICCAT's northern albacore conservation and management program), as well as consider refinements of the interim HCR, at the November 2018 meeting



ICCAT Rec 17-06: Western Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Interim Conservation and Management Plan

- This interim plan is intended to be responsive to the scientific advice while recognizing the need for a transition between the 20-year rebuilding program adopted in 1998 and a future approach to managing the stock that relies on management procedures, as recommended by ICCAT for priority stocks
- **Increased overall TAC from 2,000 mt to 2,350 mt (inclusive of dead discards) for each of 2018, 2019, and 2020**
 - Adopted TAC is consistent with the SCRS recommendations
 - U.S. baseline quota increased from 1,058.79 mt to 1,247.86 mt
 - Total U.S. quota, including 25 mt to account for bycatch related to pelagic longline fisheries in the Northeast Distant gear restricted area, increased to 1,272.86 mt
- Maintained other provisions of prior recommendation (Rec 16-08), including:
 - School BFT limit of no more than 10% by weight (US: 127.3 mt)
 - 10% cap on underharvest carried forward (108.4 mt in 2018; 127.3 mt in 2019)

Rulemaking is required to modify quotas at 635.27

The codified baseline quota and subquotas will remain in effect until a final rule to implement Recommendations 17-04 and 17-06 is effective.

- Proposed rule expected later this month
- For bluefin tuna, application of the codified quota allocations to the U.S. baseline quota recommended by ICCAT in 2017 would result in the specific category quotas and subquotas in the tables on the next two slides
- The northern albacore quota is not divided into subquotas

Comparison of the baseline Atlantic bluefin tuna quotas and subquotas under the current and recommended U.S. quota

	Current	Recommended
ICCAT Recommendation	14-05; 16-08 (TAC=2,000 mt)	17-06 (TAC=2,350 mt)
	mt	mt
Baseline Annual U.S. quota	1,058.79	1,247.86
Suballocations:		
General category	466.7	555.7
Harpoon category	38.6	46.0
Longline category	148.3	163.6
Trap category	1.0	1.2
Purse Seine category	184.3	219.5
Angling category	195.2	232.4
Reserve category	24.8	29.5
Northeast Distant gear restricted area (NED) set-aside (for use by Longline category)	25	25
Annual Total U.S. quota	1,083.79	1,272.86

Comparison of *baseline* annual quota and subquotas only.

Does not reflect any adjustments such as inseason transfers or the annual quota reallocation process (for the Purse Seine and Reserve category quotas) adopted in Amendment 7 and codified in the regulations.

Application of the allocations in the quota regulations to the ICCAT-recommended BFT quota (Rec. 17-06)

Category	Annual Baseline Quotas and Subquotas			
	Quota	Subquotas		
General	555.7			
		January-March ¹	29.5	
		June-August	277.9	
		September	147.3	
		October-November	72.2	
		December	28.9	
Harpoon	46.0			
Longline	163.6			
Trap	1.2			
Purse Seine	219.5 ²			
Angling	232.4			
		School	127.3	
		Reserve		23.5
		North of 39°18' N. lat.		49.0
		South of 39°18' N. lat.		54.8
		Large School/Small Medium	99.8	
		North of 39°18' N. lat.		47.1
		South of 39°18' N. lat.		52.7
		Trophy	5.3	
		North of 39°18' N. lat.		1.8
		South of 39°18' N. lat.		1.8
		Gulf of Mexico		1.8
Reserve	29.5 ²			
U.S. Baseline Quota	1,247.86³			
Total U.S. Quota, including 25 mt for NED (Longline)	1,272.86³			

¹ January 1 through the effective date of a closure notice filed by NMFS announcing that the January subquota is reached or projected to be reached, or through March 31, whichever comes first.

² Baseline amount shown. Does not reflect the annual adjustment process (for the Purse Seine and Reserve category quotas) adopted in Amendment 7.

³ Totals subject to rounding error.

Addressing retention of shark-damaged tunas

- NMFS is also considering minor modifications to the Atlantic tunas size limit regulations to address tunas damaged by shark bites.
 - Minimum fish size regulations have applied for bluefin, bigeye, and yellowfin tuna since 1996. Minimum size: 27".
 - These tunas may be landed round with fins intact, or eviscerated with the head and fins removed as long as one pectoral fin and the **tail remain attached**. They cannot be filleted or cut into pieces at sea. The upper and lower lobes of the tail may be removed from tunas for storage purposes but the **fork of the tail must remain intact**.
 - Received requests from pelagic longline fishery participants, and others, whose catch of tunas is occasionally shark-damaged.
 - NMFS addressed issue re: shark-damaged swordfish in 1996.
 - Could address with similar regulatory text such as: " A bigeye or yellowfin tuna that is damaged by shark bites may be retained only if the remainder of the fish is equal to or greater than 27 inches..."



Anticipated timing

Quota Rule

- Proposed rule: ~ late March
- 30-day comment period
- Final rule: ~ June-July
- 30-day delay in effectiveness
- Final rule effective: ~ July-August

Other BFT actions that affect the U.S. quotas

- Annual reallocation of Purse Seine category quota to the Reserve (by April)
- Adjustment of 2018 Reserve category quota for available underharvest of the adjusted U.S. quota for 2017 (~July, once complete 2017 catch data available)



Questions?

Thank you