

November 19, 2018 (8:42 AM)

Original: English

EXPLANATORY NOTE: DRAFT RESOLUTION BY ICCAT ON DEVELOPMENT OF INITIAL MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES FOR EASTERN AND WESTERN BLUEFIN TUNA

Proposal submitted by Canada

The intention of this proposal is to facilitate development of management objectives for eastern and western Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFTE and BFTW), an important step in advancing the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for bluefin tuna. These initial management objectives do not include quantitative elements that will be necessary for use in MSE.

Fisheries management objectives can be framed in two ways: (1) conceptual objectives; or (2) operational objectives (Punt *et al.* 2016¹). Conceptual objectives are high-level aspirational objectives that verbalize a desired generic goal without including any specifics on a measurable target or timeframe for achievement. Operational objectives are more refined and more specific about measurable targets and associated likelihood of achieving those targets over determined timeframes. Operational objectives are the key foundational component of any MSE.

Development of management objectives was discussed at the *2018 Standing Working Group on Dialogue between Fisheries Scientists and Managers Meeting* (SWGSM).

The key difference in this proposal as compared to what was presented at the 2018 SWGSM meeting is the proposed expanded application of the management objectives to both BFTE and BFTW. This is intended to establish a common framework to facilitate the development of operational management objectives that would be used within the MSE. However, this common framework does not preclude different quantitative elements being introduced for each stock when operational management objectives are established. For organizational purposes and to facilitate discussion, management objectives have been grouped by the performance indicator categories that were articulated by the SCRS during the northern albacore MSE (i.e., "Status"; "Safety"; "Yield"; and "Stability").

It is proposed that Contracting Parties and Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities agree to these initial objectives at the 21st Special Meeting of the Commission and direct Panel 2 to develop fully operational management objectives, including by introducing quantitative elements and considering additions and/or modifications to the proposed management objectives. The operational management objectives developed by Panel 2 would then be proposed to the Commission for adoption in 2019, which aligns with ICCAT's schedule for the bluefin tuna MSE.

¹ A.E. Punt, D.S. Butterworth, C.L. de Moor, J.A.A. De Oliveira, and M. Haddon. 2016. Management strategy evaluation: best practices. *Fish and Fisheries* 17:303-334.

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RECALLING that one of the main goals of the SCRS Science Strategic Plan 2015-2020 is to evaluate precautionary management reference points and robust harvest control rules (HCRs) through management strategy evaluations (MSE);

ANTICIPATING the transition to using management procedures, which the Commission has recommended for bluefin tuna and other priority stocks to manage fisheries more effectively in the face of identified uncertainties, consistent with the Convention and Rec. 11-13;

CONSIDERING that the Commission intends to complete a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for Atlantic bluefin tuna by 2020;

UNDERSTANDING that conceptual objectives are high-level aspirational objectives that verbalize a desired generic goal without including any specifics on a measurable target or timeframe for achievement, while operational objectives are more refined and more specific about measurable targets and the associated likelihood of achieving those targets over determined timeframes. Operational objectives are the key foundational component of any MSE;

SEEKING to advance the development of management procedures, as agreed by the Commission pursuant to the *Recommendation by ICCAT on the Development of Harvest Control Rules and of Management Strategy Evaluation* (Rec. 15-07);

NOTING ICCAT's need to commit to developing operational management objectives for bluefin tuna in 2019;

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF ATLANTIC TUNAS (ICCAT) RESOLVES THAT:**

1. Management objectives should be established for Atlantic bluefin tuna. Operational objectives are to be based on the Convention's objective: to maintain populations at levels that will support maximum sustainable catch (usually referred to as MSY).
2. Panel 2 should undertake, preferably during a 2019 intersessional meeting of Panel 2, the development of initial operational management objectives for each stock of bluefin tuna. To facilitate this development, the following candidate management objectives should be considered:

a) Stock Status

- a. The stock should have a greater than [___]% probability of occurring in the green quadrant of the Kobe matrix;

[...]

b) Safety

- a. There should be a less than [___]% probability of the stock falling below B_{LIM} (*to be defined*);

c) Yield

- a. Maximize overall catch levels; and,

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d) Stability

- a. Any increase or decrease in TAC between management periods should be less than []%.

3. In developing initial operational management objectives, the candidate management objectives in paragraph 2 may be rejected, modified, or supplemented, as appropriate. Further, the Panel will need to consider the inclusion of timeframes. Additionally, the quantitative elements within each candidate management objective may be different between the western and eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna stocks.

3bis. Panel 2 will provide its recommendations for initial management objectives to the Bluefin Tuna MSE Technical Modelling Group and the SCRS Bluefin Tuna Species Group for review before forwarding the objectives to Commission for consideration at its 2019 annual meeting.

4. This resolution will be repealed upon adoption of final operational management objectives for Atlantic bluefin tuna by the Commission.