



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

NPFC-2025-COM09-WP07

Paper submitted by Vanuatu

Context provided by Secretariat: The attached paper was received by the Secretariat on 12 March 2025. It is posted with the understanding from the Commission Chair that Members will discuss how to apply Rules of Procedure 5.7.2:

5.7.2 Proposals and other relevant documents to be considered at a meeting shall be electronically submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary in English at least thirty (30) calendar days before the opening of the meeting. Any proposal submitted after the deadline shall not be considered unless otherwise decided by the Commission. The Executive Secretary shall immediately circulate electronic copies of all proposals to the members and observers referred to in Rule 9.1.

This will be discussed under agenda item 8.

CMM 2024-08

(Entered into force 15 May 2024)

Working paper submitted by Republic of Vanuatu

Proposal to amend CMM 2024-08 for Pacific Saury

Explanatory Note

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) has adopted this Conservation and Management Measure (CMM) for Pacific saury in accordance with its mandate under the Convention. The measure aligns with the General Principles outlined in Article 3 of the Convention, specifically:

- Paragraph (b), which mandates that measures be based on the best scientific information available to maintain or restore fisheries resources at levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield.
- Paragraph (f), which requires that fishing effort and harvest levels be based on scientific data to prevent overfishing and excess fishing capacity, ensuring sustainable use of fisheries resources.

The propose CMM emphasizes effort and catch management strategies to mitigate further stock decline and facilitate recovery, emphasizing the importance for members must reduce their annual catch from 2018 levels, with specific exemptions for small island developing States in recognition of the special circumstances faced by small island developing States. This proposal aligns with the paragraph 22 outlined in current CMM 2024-08 and General Principles outlined in Article 3 (1) of the Convention, which mandates that the Commission apply the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High seas fisheries resources in the North Pacific Ocean in a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory manner, consistent with international law.

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR PACIFIC SAURY

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),

Reaffirming the General Principles, Article 3 of the Convention, in particular, paragraph (b) stipulating that measures are adopted, based on the best scientific information available, to ensure that fisheries resources are maintained at or restored to levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield, and paragraph (f) stipulating that preventing or eliminating overfishing and excess fishing capacity and ensuring that levels of fishing effort or harvest levels are based on the best scientific information available and do not exceed those commensurate with the sustainable use of the fisheries resources;

Gravely concerned that, according to the latest stock assessment provided by the 8th meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC8) in December 2023, stock biomass of Pacific saury remains at historically low levels in recent years,

Recognizing that SC8 recommended that the Commission consider the advice, in particular “a reduction to the TAC for 2023-24 would increase the probability of higher long-term biomass and catch levels in the Pacific saury stock”;

Recognizing further that the SC8 recommended adopting interim harvest control rule (HCR) from the list to be provided by the 5th meeting of the Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS05);

Further recognizing the urgent needs to take responsible actions to prevent further degradation and to ensure recovery of the Pacific saury stock;

Adopts the following conservation and management measure in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention:

EFFORT MANAGEMENT

1. Members of the Commission, not described under paragraph 2, and that are currently fishing for Pacific saury shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury from the historical existing level.
2. Members fishing for Pacific saury in areas of their jurisdiction that are adjacent to the Convention Area shall refrain from rapid expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury from the historical existing level.¹
3. Members of the Commission participating in Pacific saury fisheries in areas under national jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area are, in accordance with relevant provisions of Article 3 of the Convention, requested to take compatible measures in paragraph 2.
4. Each Member of the Commission participating in Pacific saury fisheries shall implement either of the following measures:
 - a) to reduce the number of fishing vessels flying its flag and fishing for Pacific saury in the Convention Area by 10% from the number of its fishing vessels that fished for Pacific saury in the Convention Area in 2018; or
 - b) to prohibit fishing vessels flying its flag from engaging in fishing for Pacific saury in the Convention Area outside its designated fishing period of no longer than 180 consecutive days each year.

Each Member shall notify the Secretariat of the measure it implements and its designated fishing period in case of b. above no later than May 15th each year. The Secretariat shall summarize the notifications from Members and make it available to all Members and CNCPs. This Paragraph does not apply to Members whose fishing vessels that fished for Pacific saury in the Convention Area in 2018 were less than five (5).

¹ Paragraph 2 applies to Russia and Japan

CATCH MANAGEMENT

5. The interim harvest control rule (HCR) for Pacific saury is as attached in Annex I.
6. The interim HCR is applied until the establishment of a management procedure to be recommended through an MSE process by the Joint SC-TCC-COM Small Working Group on Management Strategy Evaluation for Pacific Saury (SWG MSE PS), or unless otherwise decided by the Commission. The SWG MSE PS and the SC shall review the performance of the interim HCR every year based on the best scientific information available, particularly the latest stock assessment results, and provide a recommendation for the Commission, as necessary.
7. For 2025, Members of the Commission agreed that the annual catch of Pacific saury in the entire area (the Convention Area and the areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area) should not exceed 202,500 metric tons, as calculated using the interim HCR in Annex I.
8. In 2025, the annual total allowable catch (TAC) of Pacific saury in the Convention Area shall be limited to 121,500 metric tons.
9. As a provisional measure until the Commission decides allocation of the TAC, each Member of the Commission shall reduce the annual total catch of Pacific saury by the fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag in 2025 by XX% from its reported catch in 2018, and shall take necessary measures so that the total catch in the Convention Area will not exceed the TAC set out in paragraph 8.
- 9bis. In recognition of the special circumstances faced by small island developing States, members of such States are exempted from the obligation to reduce the annual total catch of Pacific saury as set out in paragraph 9.
10. To comply with the TAC, the following measures shall be in place in 2025:
- a) Members of the Commission shall report to the Executive Secretary, in the electronic format, weekly catches of Pacific saury in the Convention Area by fishing vessels flying their flags by Wednesday of the next week. The Executive Secretary shall make publicly

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available the compiled catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area on the Commission's website as well as share each Member's catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area on the Member's page of Commission's website without delay; and

- b) In the event that the total reported catch of all Members [except for small island developing States as specified in Paragraph 9bis](#) reaches 90% of the TAC set out in paragraph 8, the Executive Secretary shall notify all Members without delay. Those Members with more than 10,000 mt of catch limits shall close the fishery within 72 hours from the receipt of the notification. Those Members with less than 10,000 mt of catch limits may continue operations, but their total catch shall not exceed 90% of their catch limits.

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11. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish Pacific saury record their catches and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements.

12. In the event that a Member [except for small island developing States as specified in Paragraph 9bis](#) reaches 70% of its catch limit set out in paragraph 9, the Executive Secretary shall inform that Member of that fact, with a copy to all other Members. That Member shall close the fishery for its flagged vessels when the total catch of its flagged vessels is equivalent to 100% of its catch limit. Such Member shall notify promptly the Executive Secretary of the date of the closure, except as described in paragraph 13.

13. Members fishing for Pacific saury in areas of their jurisdiction² that are adjacent to the Convention Area may divert part of their catch limit for areas under their jurisdiction to their own catch of Pacific saury in the Convention Area by vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for Pacific saury.

² Paragraph 13 applies to Russia and Japan

OTHER MEASURES

14. Development of new fishing activity for the Pacific saury fishery in the Convention Area by Members without documented historical catch for Pacific saury in the Convention Area shall be determined in accordance with relevant provisions, as appropriate, including but not limited to Article 3, paragraph (h) and Article 7, subparagraphs 1(g) and (h) of the Convention.
15. Members of the Commission shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flags operating in the Convention Area to fish Pacific saury be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system that is activated at all times.
16. In order to prevent discards and contribute to the proper stock assessment, Members of the Commission shall take necessary measures to ensure that fishing vessels flying their flags in the Convention Area retain all the catch of Pacific saury on board.
17. In order to protect juvenile fish, Members of the Commission shall take measures for fishing vessels flying their flags to refrain from fishing for Pacific saury in the areas east of 170°E from June to July. The SC and its subsidiary Small Scientific Committee on Pacific Saury will submit to the Commission relevant scientific information on geographical distribution of juvenile fish in the Convention Area, and its migration patterns.
18. The SWG MSE PS shall endeavor to consider the establishment of a management procedure to be formulated through an MSE process by the 11th Commission Meeting in 2027. The Commission shall continue to fund an external expert to support the process.
19. This CMM shall in no case be a basis for any future CMM for Pacific saury.
20. For 2025 and thereafter, the Commission at its 9th Meeting in 2025 shall establish implementation rules of the interim HCR.
21. The Commission shall review and revise, as appropriate, this CMM based on the advice and recommendations from the SC and the SWG MSE PS, at its 9th Commission meeting.

22. Consideration should be given to development aspirations of small island developing States in accordance with international law in revising this CMM.

23. This CMM shall enter into force on May 15th, 2024, replacing CMM 2023-08 and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Annex I

Interim Harvest Control Rules (HCR) for Pacific saury

1. Management Objectives for the Pacific saury fisheries

Interim Management Objectives

(a) *Recovery of the stock (prioritized objective):*

- i. *The stock biomass is rebuilt to B_{tar} within 5 years with 50% probability;*
- ii. *The stock biomass is maintained above the B_{tar} level in each of years 6-10 with 50% probability.*

2. *Avoiding unsustainable state of the stock (secondary objective):*

- i. *The annual probability in each of years 6-10 that the stock drops below B_{lim} should not exceed 10%;*
- ii. *The annual probability in each of years 6-10 that fishing mortality is above F_{lim} should not exceed 10%.*

3. *Achieving high and stable catch (tertiary objective):*

- i. *Average catch over years 6-10 is as high as possible;*
- ii. *Catch in each of years 6-10 is as stable as possible.*

Interim Biological reference points

Interim biological reference points used the interim HCR for Pacific saury are as follows:

Reference point
$B_{tar} = B_{MSY}$
$B_{lim} = 0.35B_{MSY}$
$F_{tar} = F_{MSY}$
$F_{lim} = 1.35F_{MSY}$

2. Interim Harvest Control Rules (HCRs)

Based on the latest base-case results of stock assessment of Pacific saury, annual catch level in the entire area $y = a_{y-1} * F_{MSY} * \hat{B}_{y-1}$, where $a_{y-1} = \min(1, \hat{B}_{y-1} / \hat{B}_{MSY})$

(as shown in Figure 1).

It reduces fishing intensity at biomass levels below B_{MSY} . Maximum allowable change of the annual catch level in the entire area is restricted to 10%.

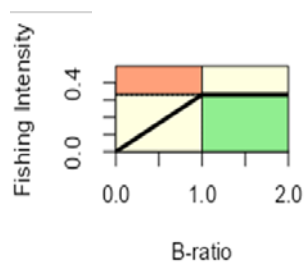


Figure 1. Illustration of the interim HCR.

3. Management cycle

The SC annually advises the Commission of the calculated annual catch level in the entire area of Pacific saury for the following year in accordance with the interim HCR as described in paragraph 2, based on the latest stock assessment results.