



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

NPFC-2026-COM10-WP04

Submitted by Japan

Proposed revisions to CMM 2025-11 for Japanese Sardine, Neon Flying Squid and Japanese Flying Squid

Abstract

CMM 2025-11 covers Japanese sardine, Neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid.

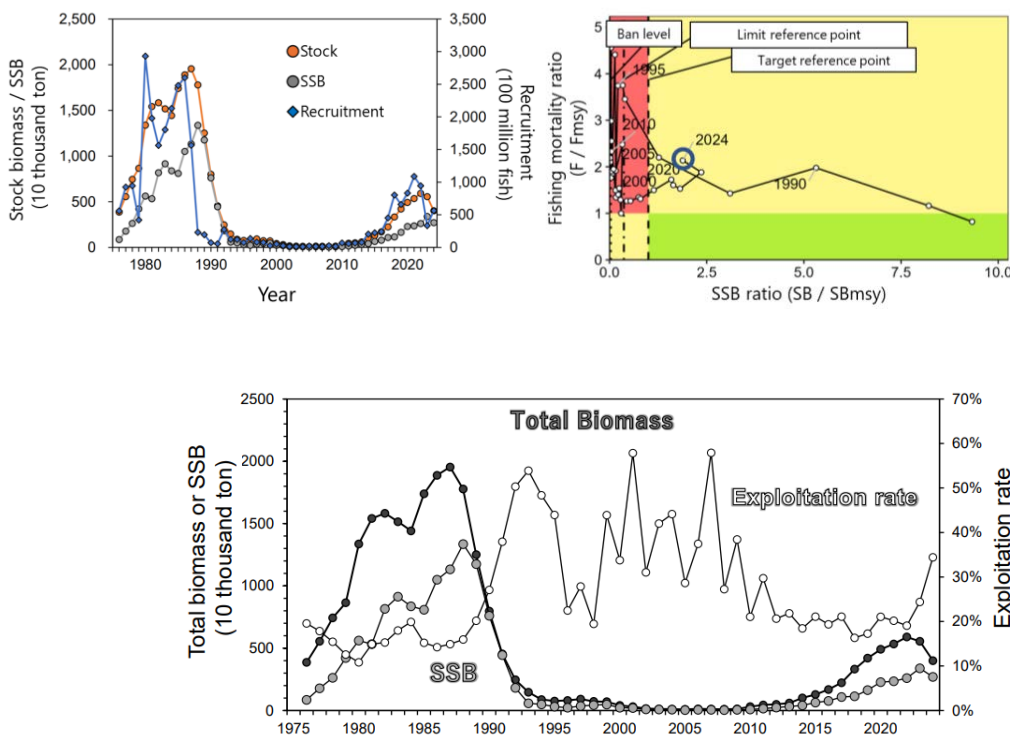
Japan proposes:

1. Separating the CMM into sardine and squids.
2. Adopting a catch limit for Japanese sardine in a stand-alone CMM.
3. Leaving the two squid species in a separate stand-alone CMM by removing reference to sardine and with no other changes to the text associated with these species.

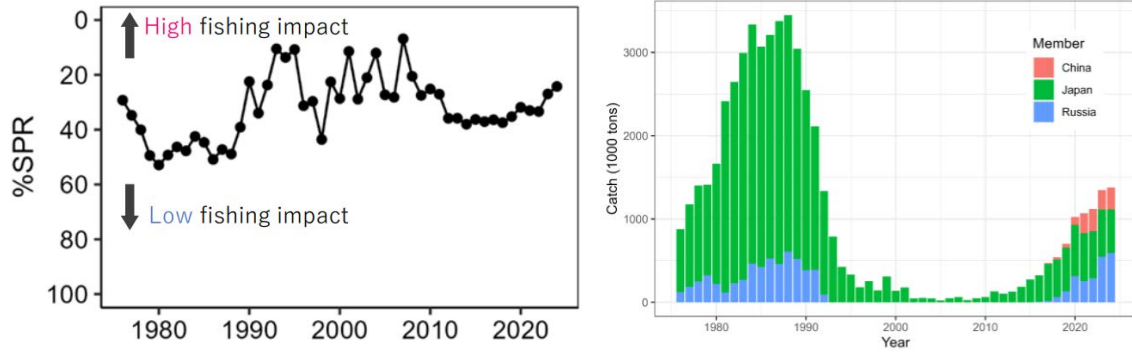
Explanatory Note

Japanese sardine is a straddling stock of which spawning grounds are formed in the Japanese coastal waters, and the main distribution area lies within the coastal Member EEZs. It has been one of the most important fishery resources for Japanese coastal and offshore fisheries as well as local communities.

Although NPFC has just started the preparatory work to conduct stock assessment for Japanese sardine, Japan has been conducting a series of stock assessments for Japanese sardine and managing its fisheries through the TAC system for years. The latest result of Japan's stock assessment was presented at the 10th Scientific Committee¹, showing that the stock biomass has declined and the fishing mortality ratio has increased, resulting in the sharp increase in the exploitation rate since 2022. Fishing mortality in 2024 is estimated to be 114% higher than F_{msy} (F/F_{msy} in 2024 = 2.14). Future projections show the current fishing mortality will lead to a constant decrease in spawning stock biomass. Further, all recruitment indices in recent three years indicate sharp declines, which are alarming signs for future stock status.



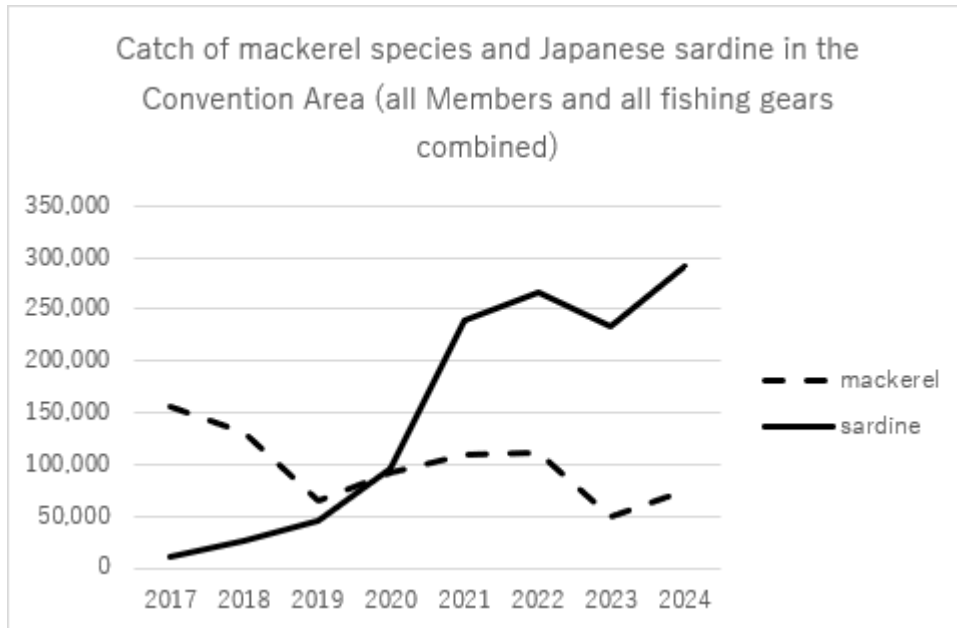
¹ Japan's domestic stock assessment for Japanese sardine was presented to the 10th Scientific Committee Meeting (NPFC-2025-SC07-IP07 and NPFC-2025-SC10-WP23). Also, it is submitted to the 10th Commission meeting as Information Paper.



Based on the stock assessment results and future projections, Japan has reduced its domestic TAC for 2025 and 2026 by approximately 30% from 2024, to ensure the stock maintains above MSY level.

Under UNFSA, in managing a straddling stock on the high-seas, it is required to take into account the measures that coastal States implement in their EEZs, and to ensure that measures on the high-seas do not undermine the effectiveness of measures of coastal states. However, it is a concerning fact that effective conservation and management measures for Japanese sardine have not been implemented in the NPFC Convention area.

Catch of Japanese sardine in the Convention Area has been drastically increased since 2021. In recent years, the main target species for purse seine fishery and pelagic trawling fishery in the Convention Area is not chub mackerel but Japanese sardine. This means that the existing provision in CMM2025-11 to restrict the number of authorized vessels does not work to control the fishing pressure on Japanese sardine.



Data source: Summary Footprint in NPFC website

With these backgrounds, Japan proposes the revisions to Conservation and Management Measure of Japanese sardine to set a catch limit in the Convention Area as attached, with a view to preventing fishing operations in the Convention Area from undermining the conservation efforts by coastal Members. The current CMM 2025-11 covers Japanese sardine, Neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid because the same management measures have applied to these species. However, here, since setting a catch limit is proposed for only Japanese sardine, Japan proposes to split the CMM into two separate CMMs as attached. As for CMM for Neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid, Japan does not change the contents, but just deleting Japanese sardine aspects.



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

CMM ~~2026~~2025-~~XX11~~

(Entered into force ~~XX10~~ ~~XX~~July 20262025)

**CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR JAPANESE SARDINE,
NEON FLYING SQUID AND JAPANESE FLYING SQUID**

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),

Recalling that six pelagic species—Pacific saury, chub mackerel, blue mackerel, Japanese sardine, neon flying squid, and Japanese flying squid—are identified as priority species;

Also ~~Recalling~~ that the NPFC has adopted the CMMs as provisional measure on threetwo species – Japanese sardine, neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid – to restrict the number of fishing vessels authorized to fish for such species ~~Pacific saury and chub mackerel;~~

Noting that ~~specific measures for the remaining four species have yet to be introduced while those species have been subject to extensive fishing practices, whether they are target or bycatch species;~~

Reaffirming the General Principles provided in Article 3 of the Convention, in particular, Paragraph (h) stipulating that any expansion of fishing effort does not proceed without prior assessment of the impacts of those fishing activities on the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources;

Noting paragraph 1(a) of Article 7 of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks of 4 December 1995 (hereinafter, “1995 Agreement”), stipulating that the relevant coastal States and the States whose nationals fish for straddling fish stocks in the adjacent high seas area shall seek to agree upon the measures necessary for the conservation of these stocks in the adjacent high seas area;

Recognizing paragraph 2(a) of Article 7 of the 1995 Agreement stipulating that the conservation and management measures adopted and applied in accordance with Article 61 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in respect of the same stocks by coastal States within areas under national jurisdiction and ensure that measures established in respect of such stocks for the high seas do not undermine the effectiveness of such measures;

Recognizing further coastal Members of the Commission have been implementing conservation and management measures for Japanese sardine in areas under their national jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area;

Reaffirming paragraph (i) of Article 3 of the Convention, stipulating in accordance with Article 7 of the 1995 Agreement, that conservation and management measures established for straddling fish

stocks on the high seas and those adopted for areas under national jurisdiction are compatible in order to ensure conservation and management of these fisheries resources in their entirety;

Noting that the NPFC Catch/Effort statistics show a significant increase in Japanese sardine catches in recent years;

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

1. Members of the Commission and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CNCs) with substantial harvest of any of Japanese sardine, ~~neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid (hereinafter referred to as “the three Pelagic Species”)~~ in the Convention Area shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level until the stock assessment for such species by the SC has been completed.
2. Members of the Commission and CNCs without substantial harvest of ~~Japanese sardine~~ ~~the three Pelagic Species~~ in the Convention Area are encouraged to refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level until the stock assessment for such species by the SC has been completed.

2bis. In 2026 and 2027, each Member of the Commission and CNC shall take necessary measures to ensure that its total annual catch of Japanese sardine in the Convention Area shall not exceed the 70% level of its average annual reported catch during 2022-2024.

3. Members of the Commission participating in fishing for the ~~Japanese sardine~~ ~~three Pelagic Species~~ in areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area are requested to take compatible measures in paragraph 1. Such Members¹ may divert part of their catch limit for areas under their jurisdiction to their own catch of the species in the Convention Area by vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for the species, provided that: (i) the Member has established a catch limit for the species in its jurisdiction; (ii) the Member has notified the Commission of the catch limit; and (iii) the total catch of the species in the Convention Area and the areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area will not exceed the Member’s total catch limit for its jurisdiction respectively.
4. Development of new fishing activity for ~~Japanese sardine~~ ~~the three Pelagic Species~~ in the Convention Area by Members of the Commission without documented historical catch for such species 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 Paragraph 3 applies to Russia and Japan

1(g) and (h) of the Convention.

5. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag operating in the Convention Area authorized to fish for Japanese sardine~~the three Pelagic Species~~ are to be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system that is activated at all times.
6. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for Japanese sardine~~the three Pelagic Species~~ in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements.
7. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall provide their data on Japanese sardine~~the three Pelagic Species~~ in accordance with the data requirements adopted by the Commission in the Annual Report ~~by the end of February~~, every year. The Commission shall review such information at the annual meeting of every year.
8. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall cooperate to take necessary measures including sharing information, in order to accurately understand the situation and eliminate IUU fishing for Japanese sardine~~the three Pelagic Species~~.
9. After a stock assessment for Japanese sardine~~any of the three Pelagic Species~~ has been completed, the provisions in Paragraph 1 and [2bis] shall be reviewed by the Commission and those provisions shall not be a precedent to hinder those Members who are not harvesting substantial amounts of the three Pelagic Species assessed in the Convention Area to develop their own fisheries in the Convention Area noting the Commission shall regularly review the harvests of Japanese sardine~~such species~~ in the Convention Area by all Members.
10. This management measure shall expire and be replaced by the measure to be adopted by the Commission based on the advice and recommendations from the Scientific Committee.



North Pacific Fisheries Commission

CMM ~~2026~~2025-11

(Entered into force ~~XX10~~ ~~XX~~July ~~2026~~2025)

**CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR ~~JAPANESE SARDINE,~~
NEON FLYING SQUID AND JAPANESE FLYING SQUID**

The North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC),

Recalling that six pelagic species – Pacific saury, chub mackerel, blue mackerel, Japanese sardine, neon flying squid, and Japanese flying squid – are identified as priority species;

Also recalling that the NPFC has adopted the CMMs on ~~threetwo~~ species – Pacific saury, ~~and~~ chub mackerel ~~[and Japanese sardine]~~;

Noting that specific measures for the remaining ~~threefour~~ species have yet to be introduced while those species have been subject to extensive fishing practices, whether they are target or bycatch species;

Reaffirming the General Principles provided in Article 3 of the Convention, in particular, Paragraph (h) stipulating that any expansion of fishing effort does not proceed without prior assessment of the impacts of those fishing activities on the long-term sustainability of fisheries resources;

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

1. Members of the Commission and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties (CNCs) with substantial harvest of any of ~~Japanese sardine,~~ neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid (hereinafter referred to as “the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species”) in the Convention Area shall refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level until the stock assessment for such species by the SC has been completed.
2. Members of the Commission and CNCs without substantial harvest of the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species in the Convention Area are encouraged to refrain from expansion, in the Convention Area, of the number of fishing vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for such species from the historical existing level until the stock assessment for such species by the SC has been completed.
3. Members of the Commission participating in fishing for the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species in areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area are requested to take compatible

measures in paragraph 1. Such Members¹ may divert part of their catch limit for areas under their jurisdiction to their own catch of the species in the Convention Area by vessels entitled to fly their flags and authorized to fish for the species, provided that: (i) the Member has established a catch limit for the species in its jurisdiction; (ii) the Member has notified the Commission of the catch limit; and (iii) the total catch of the species in the Convention Area and the areas under their jurisdiction adjacent to the Convention Area will not exceed the Member's total catch limit for its jurisdiction respectively.

4. Development of new fishing activity for the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species in the Convention Area by Members of the Commission without documented historical catch for such species 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.
5. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag operating in the Convention Area authorized to fish the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species are to be equipped with an operational vessel monitoring system that is activated at all times.
6. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall ensure that fishing vessels flying their flag that fish for the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species in the Convention Area record their catches, including incidental catches of other NPFC species, and any discards and report them to the relevant flag state authorities in accordance with their national data recording and reporting requirements.
7. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall provide their data on the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species in accordance with the data requirements adopted by the Commission in the Annual Report ~~by the end of February~~, every year. The Commission shall review such information at the annual meeting of every year.
8. Members of the Commission and CNCPs shall cooperate to take necessary measures including sharing information, in order to accurately understand the situation and eliminate IUU fishing for the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species.
9. After a stock assessment for any of the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species has been completed, the provisions in Paragraph 1 shall be reviewed by the Commission and those provisions shall not be a precedent to hinder those Members who are not harvesting substantial amounts of the ~~twothree~~ Pelagic Species assessed in the Convention Area to develop their own fisheries in the Convention Area noting the Commission shall regularly review the harvests of such species in the Convention Area by all Members.
10. This management measure shall expire and be replaced by the measure to be adopted by the Commission based on the advice and recommendations from the Scientific Committee.

¹ Paragraph 3 applies to Russia and Japan