



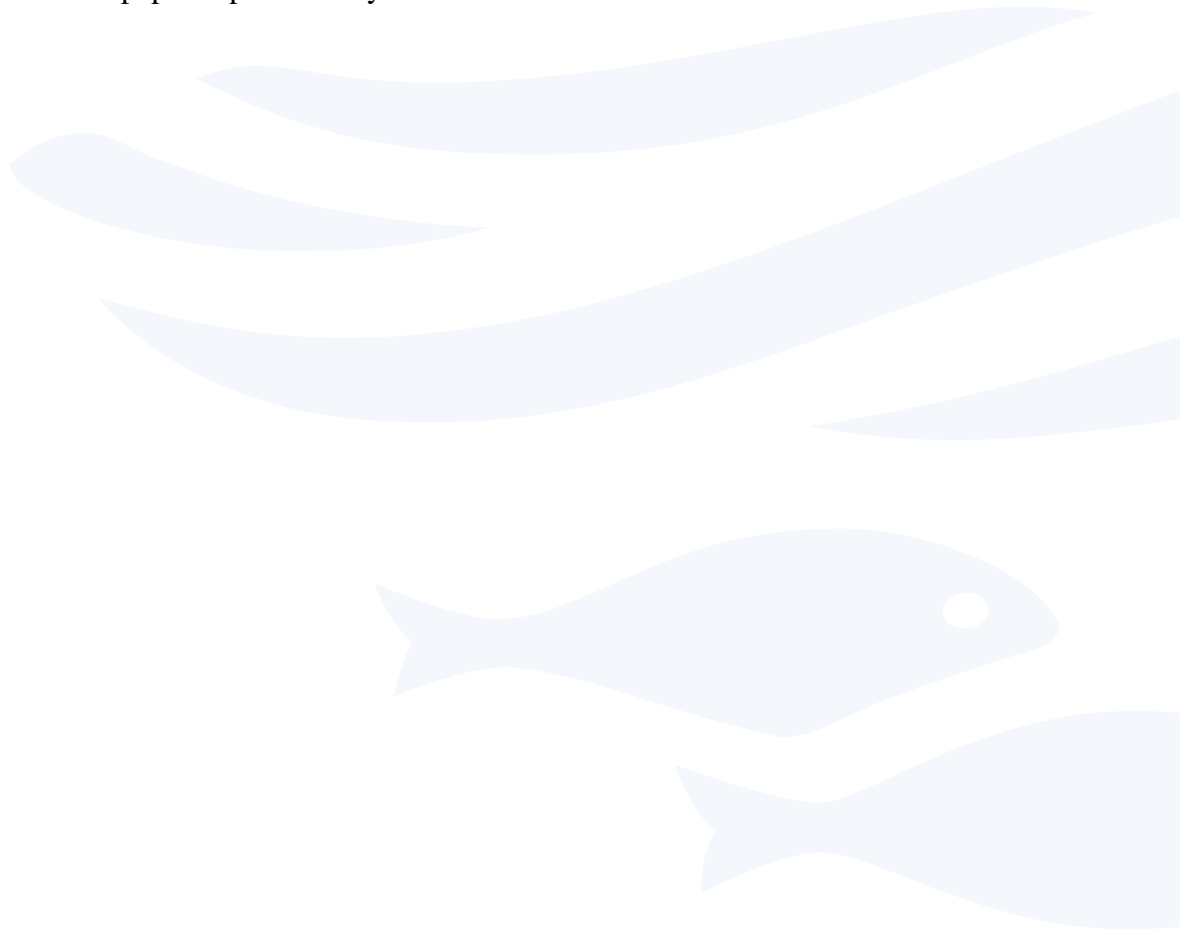
North Pacific Fisheries Commission

NPFC-2026-COM10-OP07

Submitted by Pew Charitable Trusts

## Opening Statement to COM10

**Abstract:** The attached paper is provided by the Pew Charitable Trusts





**Statement to the North Pacific Fisheries Commission**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee and 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Commission**  
**April 8-17, Osaka, Japan**

The Pew Charitable Trusts welcomes the opportunity to participate in the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Technical and Compliance Committee (TCC) and the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC). We appreciate the efforts of the Secretariat, Chair, and Members to convene this meeting and urge the Commission to adopt approaches that would provide greater resilience and stability to the region's fisheries, particularly as climate change is impacting north Pacific fish stocks. Noting the progress recently made at the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO), we encourage NPFC to take steps to adopt new policies on port State measures and monitoring, control, and surveillance. Progress here would mean that these and other good policies would be in place for all four major RFMOs in the Pacific.

At the meeting in Osaka, we specifically recommend that NPFC:

**1. Adopt port State measures and improve the IUU Vessel List**

As this year marks the tenth session of the NPFC and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the entry into force of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), Pew strongly urges members to join the other RFMOs by adopting port State measures this year. SPRFMO adopted strong measures last month that closely align with the requirements of the PSMA, and NPFC should follow that example. Now that nearly all NPFC Members have acceded to or ratified the PSMA, the Commission should act to adopt its own measures.

Additionally, we urge members to adopt the proposals from [Canada](#) and the [USA](#) to strengthen and provide important clarity regarding the IUU vessel lists. Together, these proposals would lengthen the time during which a vessel can be investigated for illegal fishing to five years from one, allowing for more comprehensive investigations of the alleged illegal activity, and they would require any vessels tied to the same beneficial owner as one on the IUU vessel list to receive similar restrictions on authorization to fish.

**2. Advance work toward adoption of a fully specified management procedure for Pacific saury**

The interim harvest control rule (HCR) adopted in 2024 to set annual catch limits for Pacific saury is working, with a TAC adopted quickly, after only minor negotiations at the 2025 Commission meeting. The stock is also showing signs of improvement, and NPFC should continue to implement the HCR this year without alterations. It was only intended to be used for a short period, and adoption of a fully specified management procedure is scheduled for 2027. The Commission should encourage NPFC scientists to complete the work within this deadline. Proposals to [weaken the HCR](#) by changing the recovery timeline in order to increase catch levels

or to delay adoption of the full MP to 2028 should be rejected. This is particularly important given the role that Pacific saury plays in marine food webs.

### **3. Advance work toward management procedures for other priority species**

Completing a stock assessment for Pacific chub mackerel in 2025 was a significant step toward better management for this valuable and ecologically important species. Forming a small scientific committee for neon flying squid demonstrates NPFC's commitment to better managing squid fisheries. Building on these scientific efforts, NPFC should begin development of management strategy evaluation for both species.

Last year, the Commission agreed to include a paragraph calling on the Scientific Committee to complete a chub mackerel MSE by 2029, but the language was inadvertently left out of the published measure. That mistake should be rectified this year during discussions of proposals on [catch limits](#) and [reporting](#) for the fishery, both of which should be adopted as they aim to support long term sustainability and better oversight of chub mackerel fisheries.

Science is underway to learn more about the neon flying squid stock, and NPFC should add language to a new measure to direct scientists to complete MSE for this species as well. To support efforts for both of these species, Pew recommends updating the terms of reference of the Pacific saury MSE group to broaden it to all NPFC species where dialogue between managers and scientists on MSE is needed.

### **4. Pause fishing for vulnerable deep-sea stocks**

NPFC should adopt the USA's [proposal](#) on rebuilding north Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino stocks. Fishing for these species is no longer possible in some areas, and while the status is not well understood, scientists believe both stocks are likely overfished and experiencing too much fishing pressure. Furthermore, the gears used to target these species are detrimental to important habitat found in vulnerable marine ecosystems and other regions along the Emperor Seamount Chain. For these reasons, NPFC should support the proposal and pause fishing for Pacific armorhead and splendid alfonsino until there is reasonable scientific certainty that fishing for these species can be sustainable in the north Pacific. MSE should be considered a tool to better understand the stock status and test potential management measures that would promote recovery.

### **5. Adopt minimum data standards**

NPFC scientific and compliance processes all require data collection and submission by Members, but if these data are not standardized, their utility to NPFC processes may be limited. Members should adopt the [proposal](#) from the European Union that addresses this issue. Not only does the proposal allow for data to be more comparable, but it would also pave the way for other important monitoring, control, and surveillance tools like a regional observer program for fishing vessels or an electronic monitoring program that would allow fishing vessels to achieve their monitoring requirements using cameras, sensors, and other technologies. Data

standardization is one area, in particular, where NPFC must catch up with other RFMOs operating in the Pacific and across other ocean basins.

**6. Prepare for the first Conference of the Parties to the BBNJ Agreement**

The third Preparatory Committee meeting for the BBNJ Agreement recently concluded, and the United Nations will host the first Conference of the Parties (COP) in late 2026 or early 2027. It was notable that while many RFMO secretariats were present at the preparatory meeting, NPFC was not. Pew urges parties to consider developing and adopting processes to ensure that NPFC is ready to engage in BBNJ implementation, including efforts related to marine protected areas on the high seas. This includes providing space in the NPFC Commission meeting agenda to discuss BBNJ-related matters, supporting Secretariat staff in participating in relevant meetings, and continuing to advance data sharing agreements where appropriate.

With these and other efforts, NPFC can continue advancing sustainability of fisheries in the north Pacific and can demonstrate leadership on a variety of issues important to stakeholders. We invite all delegates to our lunchtime [side event](#) on April 15<sup>th</sup> in the Plenary room where panelists will speak on the importance of the WTO Subsidies Agreement, relevant outcomes from the recent Convention on Migratory Species, the BBNJ Agreement, and other international efforts relevant to the NPFC.