IDENTIFICATION

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Katsuwonus pelamis

SPECIES NAME(S)
Skipjack tuna

COMMON NAMES
Skipjack tuna

STOCK IDENTIFICATION
It is likely that skipjack are distributed throughout the Pacific as a single population. Exchange of fish between the eastern and western region is not common. The majority of catches occur in the eastern and western regions. Therefore assessments are conducted for both the eastern and western regions (Maunder 2015).

ASSESSMENT

Strengths
- Fishing mortality rates and biomass are currently thought to be sustainable.
- Discarding of tunas is prohibited.
- There is a multi-year conservation plan in place, which has just been extended, for skipjack tuna (and other tuna species).
- A harvest control rule has been adopted.
- There is 100% observer coverage on large purse seine vessels operating on the high seas.

Weaknesses
- There are no MSY based reference points used for skipjack tuna in the EPO.
- There are time/area closures in place for the purse seine fleet but these measures are not sufficient to manage the fish aggregating device (FAD) fishery.
- Purse seine fisheries can interact with ETP species.

SCORES

Management Quality:
- Stock Health:
  - Current Health ≥ 8
  - Future Health ≥ 8

Recommendations

CATCHERS & REGULATORS
1. Ensure member countries comply with all Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission’s (IATTC) conservation and management measures (CMMs), including measures aimed at both target and incidental market and non-market species, and all other obligations. Through your delegation to IATTC, encourage the compliance committee to make information on non-compliance by individual members and cooperating non-members publicly available and transparent.

2. A) Regulators – Promote the adoption by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission’s (IATTC) and member countries of precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures, including MSY based biological reference points, harvest control rules (interim plan is currently being used), national management measures and monitoring efforts adequate to ensure harvest strategy objectives are being met.
B) Catchers – Inform relevant delegations to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission’s (IATTC), those being Member and Cooperating Non-Members in countries where your company is incorporated and where your company conducts operations, to have IATTC adopt a formal MSY based target reference point for EPO skipjack tuna, a harvest strategy responsive to the state of the stock and designed to achieve the limit and target reference points, and management measure and tools consistent with the harvest strategy that reduces fishing mortality, as a limit reference point is approached. Comply with current required onboard observer coverage rates.

3. Encourage IATTC to conduct a feasibility study for routine sampling (i.e. length data) of adult tunas from canneries and to continue monitoring the average weight of skipjack tuna. Improved tagging data is also needed for skipjack tuna in the EPO region to properly define populations. Encourage IATTC to implement additional management measures to reduce fish aggregating device (FAD) fishing mortality, such as limiting the number of FAD sets allowed each year.

4. Conduct studies, increase monitoring and publish information to assess longline and purse seine interactions with endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) and other bycatch species. Identify and mandate best practice bycatch mitigation techniques. Central American countries should work with IATTC to provide various information on shark catches ([http://www.iattc.org/Meetings/Meetings2015/6SAC/PDFs/SAC-06-05.PDF](http://www.iattc.org/Meetings/Meetings2015/6SAC/PDFs/SAC-06-05.PDF))
Demand compliance with recently implemented IATTC management measures prohibiting the retention of oceanic whitetip sharks. Encourage IATTC to adopt similar measures to those adopted by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission for silky sharks, including prohibited retention by purse seine vessels.

RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

1. Encourage both the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission’s (IATTC) and individual member and cooperating non-members to adopt precautionary and ecosystem-based management measures. Demand that member countries comply with all IATTC’s Conservation and Management Measures, and request the IATTC make information on monitoring and compliance publicly available.

2. Explore implementation of control documents to ensure supplier compliance with IATTC conservation and management measures (CMMs) (e.g., around bycatch). Source from vessels registered on the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) Proactive Vessel Register (PVR) and in full compliance with all measures relevant to their gear type as demonstrated by annual independent audit reports that are made publicly available. Encourage ISSF to expand the ecological sustainability criteria against which tuna vessels on the PVR are assessed.

3. Encourage the IATTC and member countries to conduct studies, increase monitoring and publish information with protected, endangered and threatened (PET) and other bycatch species. Explore opportunities to support studies and data gathering.

4. Contact SFP to learn more about fishery improvement projects (FIPs) and the Eastern Pacific Large Pelagic Supplier Roundtable.