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## CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR NORTH PACIFIC SWORDFISH

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Conservation and Management Measure 2023-03

*The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC),*

*Noting that* Harvest Strategy for North Pacific Swordfish Fisheries was adopted at WCPFC16, which established the Limit Reference Point for the exploitation rate (F-limit) of  $F_{MSY}$ ;

*Observing that* the best scientific evidence on Western and Central North Pacific Swordfish from the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) indicates that the species is not likely overfished and is not likely experiencing overfishing relative to MSY-based or 20% of unfished spawning biomass-based reference points;

*Also observing that* the best scientific evidence on Eastern Pacific Swordfish from the ISC indicates that the species is not likely overfished but is likely experiencing overfishing some of the recent years relative to MSY-based reference points, and there is an uncertainty in stock boundary between Western Central North Pacific stock and Eastern Pacific stock that are being reviewed by the ISC toward the stock assessment scheduled in 2023; and

*Recalling* Article 5(c) of the WCPFC Convention that requires application of the precautionary approach for the conservation and management of highly migratory fish stocks in the WCPF Convention Area;

*Adopts*, in accordance with the Article 10 of the WCPFC Convention that:

1. This measure shall apply in the high seas and EEZs within the Convention Area north of 20° N (hereinafter referred to as “the Area”).
2. The Members, Cooperating Non-Members and participating territories (hereinafter referred to as CCMs) shall take necessary measures to ensure that the level of fishing effort of their fisheries taking more than 200 metric tons per year of North Pacific swordfish in the Area is not increased beyond 2008-2010 average annual level <sup>1,1</sup>.
3. Paragraphs 2 and 4 shall not be applied to those fisheries taking less than 200 metric tons of North Pacific swordfish in the Area per year. However, if the catches of such fisheries exceed 200 metric tons in any given year, the Commission shall adopt appropriate management measure for such fisheries.

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<sup>1</sup> For the US swordfish longline fishery, the level of fishing effort shall not be increased beyond the maximum number of limited entry permits available during 2008-2010.

<sup>1</sup> For the Chinese Taipei’s coastal artisanal longline fishery, the level of fishing effort shall not be increased beyond the number of vessels licensed during 2008-2010.

4. All CCMs shall report annually to the WCPFC Commission all catches of North Pacific swordfish in the Area and all fishing effort in those fisheries as well as catch and effort across the North Pacific subject to the measures in paragraph 2, by gear type using the template provided in Annex 1.
5. The provisions of paragraph 2 shall not prejudice the legitimate rights and obligations under international law of those small island developing State Members and participating territories in the Convention Area whose current fishing activity for North Pacific swordfish is limited, but that have a real interest in, and history of, fishing for the species, that may wish to develop their own fisheries for North Pacific swordfish in the future.
6. The provisions of paragraph 5 shall not provide a basis for an increase in fishing effort by fishing vessels owned or operated by interests outside such small island developing State Members or participating territories, unless such fishing is conducted in support of efforts by such Members and territories to develop their own domestic fisheries.

**Annex 1. Average annual fishing effort for 2008-2010 and annual fishing effort for subsequent years for fisheries taking North Pacific swordfish**

CCM	Area <sup>3</sup>	Fishery (gear type)	2008-2010 Average			Year			Year			Year		
			Catch (t)	No. of vessels	Fishing days <sup>4</sup>	Catch (t)	No. of vessels	Fishing days	Catch (t)	No. of vessels	Fishing days	Catch (t)	No. of vessels	Fishing days

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<sup>3</sup> If collective effort limits across the North Pacific Ocean, report the Area and North Pacific Ocean separately.

<sup>4</sup> Fishing days shall be the total days of fishing (both targeting and bycatch). CCMs can consider the plural effort metrics in Annex 1 to this CMM in their entirety and in the case of fisheries that take NPS as bycatch, the metric of “fishing days” may not be appropriate for assessing the compliance with the effort control provision.