



WWF POSITION

April 2026
10th Commission Meeting of the
North Pacific Fisheries
Commission (NPFC):
Osaka, Japan: April 14 – 17,
2026

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) would like to thank the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) for providing the opportunity to attend the 10th Commission Meeting as an observer and to contribute to the critically important role that it plays to ensure the proper management of the North Pacific Ocean (NPO) fisheries.

WWF urges measures to protect key fish species and achieve sustainable fisheries in the NPFC.

Data sharing, Stock assessment and Harvest Strategies

For all fish species under NPFC management, a harvest strategy (HS) including target/limit reference points (TRPs/LRPs), harvest control rules (HCRs), and Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) should be introduced, as based on the scientific advice arising from relevant stock assessments.

Pacific saury has already been managed based on HCR and MSE and it has progressed management practices at NPFC. In the 10th NPFC Science Committee (SC10), Members were unable to reach consensus on the stock assessment results, which serve as the basis for subsequent management measures. However, the draft stock assessment results submitted to the SC10 by three Members indicate that Pacific saury stocks remain at low levels, necessitating stock recovery.

For chub mackerel, stock assessments have been conducted, clearly indicating that stock levels are low and recovery measures are insufficient.

For Japanese sardines, neon flying squid and Japanese flying squid, stock assessments have not yet been conducted. However, catches of Japanese sardines and Japanese flying squid have drastically declined in recent years, necessitating urgent measures to prevent further depletion.

WWF recommends that the NPFC:

- **Reduce the TAC for Pacific saury to at least 10% from the previous year. Considering the high uncertainty that prevented agreement on the stock assessment results, a reduction exceeding the level specified by current HCR is necessary from a precautionary perspective.**
- **Reduce the fishing mortality for chub mackerel to allow stock recovery, in accordance with the SC10 advice.**

- **Establish interim TACs for fish species such as Japanese sardine, where the catch level has declined significantly, in accordance with the precautionary approach, even if stock assessments for those species have not yet been completed.**
- **Share fishery data (catch, effort, size etc.) on Members' domestic fisheries with NPFC for all NPFC-managed species to enable effective monitoring of stocks lacking completed assessment.**

Measures against IUU Fishing

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing is recognized as one of the most serious international issues, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals, and by the G7 and G20, given its linkages to overfishing and associated human rights issues. In recent years, IUU fishing measures have been strengthened in many Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). In addition, the EU requires a catch certificate for all fish species it imports, and the U.S. requires it for 13 fish species before importation. Similar measures have been taken in Japan and South Korea for NPFC-managed species. Therefore, NPFC is strongly encouraged to strengthen its anti IUU fishing measures so as to ensure it does not fall behind other RFMOs.

WWF recommends that the NPFC:

- **Introduce a catch documentation scheme (CDS) for all species which NPFC manages. For Pacific Saury, where Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) implementation is already underway, CDSs should be introduced as soon as possible to ensure effective management.**
- **The Key Data Elements (KDEs) in the CDS should be harmonized with those of other RFMOs and Import Control Rules of domestic laws by Japan and South Korea.**
- **Require a human observer to be on board or introduce electronic monitoring systems (EM) for all industrial fishing vessels. EM standards should be established as soon as possible in a manner that harmonizes with the standards of WCPFC, IATTC, ICCAT and IOTC, where such standards have already been established.**

Conservation of deep-sea ecosystems

The NPFC has a responsibility to ensure the conservation of the deep-sea ecosystem in the North Pacific and the sustainable management of fisheries. In particular, deep-sea fishing requires particular consideration to protect the vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) existing there. For splendid alfonsino, there continues to be a high likelihood that growth overfishing is occurring (harvest before the size that maximizes yield-per-recruit), and that splendid alfonsino is being captured before they are mature, likely reducing the spawning potential according to SC10.

WWF recommends that the NPFC:

- **Reduce fishing mortality on immature splendid alfonsino and takes any other measures needed to ensure stock sustainability.**



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