

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE SOUTHWEST REGION
HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES REPORT

FISHERY RELATED ACTIONS

MRIP Funding for HMS Shark Project: The HMS Management Team submitted a proposal to the NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) entitled “Phased Development and Validation of Survey Design Elements for the West Coast Highly Migratory Shark Species Recreational Fishery.” The MRIP Executive Committee approved the proposal and approximately \$66,000 has been earmarked to carry out the project during the fall and winter 2009-2010.

MRIP Funding for Albacore Index of Abundance Project: The HMS Management Team submitted a second proposal to the NMFS Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) entitled “Evaluation of the Potential to use West Coast Recreational For-Hire Sector Data to Produce a Catch Per Unit Effort Index of Abundance For North Pacific Albacore Tuna.” The MRIP Executive Committee approved the proposal and approximately \$33,000 has been earmarked to carry out the project during the fall and winter 2009-2010.

REGULATORY ACTIONS

HMS Permit Fee Rule Effective: The final rule to collect permit fees for obtaining a HMS permit became effective on August 27, 2009, specifies that an application for an HMS permit, including the renewal of an existing permit, must include a fee payable by the vessel owner. The fee amount is \$30 and will be valid for a 2-year period.

INTERNATIONAL MATTERS

Adoption of EPO Tropical Tuna Management Resolution: At the June 2009. IATTC Meeting the *Resolution on a Multiannual Program for the Conservation of Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean in 2009-2011*(Resolution C-09-01) was adopted. Key points include:

- Fishing on skipjack, bigeye, and yellowfin tuna in the IATTC Convention Area by all purse seine vessels class sizes 4-6 (greater than 182 metric tons carrying capacity) is restricted during a closure period of 59 days in 2009, 62 days in 2010, and 73 days in 2011. Members have two options for when to implement the respective closure period for each applicable year. For 2009, the United States is proposing to implement the closure period from November 21, 2009, to January 18, 2010, for its purse seine fleet.
- Purse seine vessels of capacity class size 4 (between 182 and 272 metric tons carrying capacity) may make one fishing trip of up to 30 days duration during the specified closure periods, provided that any such vessel carries an observer of the On-Board Observer Program of the AIDCP.

- A closure for purse seine vessels in an area to the west of the Galapagos Islands between September, 29 to October, 29 in each year.
- Beginning 2010, all applicable purse seine vessels must retain on board and land all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught, except fish considered unfit for human consumption for reasons other than size. A single exemption exists on the final set of a trip.
- Country-specific longline catch limits for bigeye tuna were adopted for China, Japan, Korea, and Chinese Taipei for 2009-2011. Other IATTC Parties and cooperating non-Parties are limited to the greater of 500 metric tons or their respective catches of bigeye tuna in 2001. The U.S. limit on bigeye tuna is 500 metric tons in the EPO for 2009-2011. The bigeye tuna catch limits only apply to longline vessels over 24 meters in length.

Entry into Force of the Antigua Convention: On 27 May 2009, Costa Rica was the seventh Party to the 1949 Convention to ratify or accede to the Antigua Convention. The United States, as depositary government for Antigua, has stated that Antigua shall enter into force 15 months after the accession of Costa Rica, i.e., on August 27, 2010, pursuant to Art. XXXI of the Antigua Convention. The six Parties that ratified/acceded to Antigua before Costa Rica were El Salvador, France, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. The European Union, Canada, Belize, Korea have also ratified or acceded, for a total of 11 governments to date. When the Convention enters into force, all IATTC members that do not decide otherwise will remain members of the Commission.

The Memorandum of Understanding for Exchange of Data with the WCPFC: The MOU was approved by the IATTC. The MOU has already been approved by the WCPFC; however, the IATTC agreed upon some minor changes to language, thus the WCPFC will still need to approve of these changes. The confidentiality requirements of both Commissions will be upheld.

North Pacific Albacore Recommendations: It was recommended by the United States that an informal meeting be scheduled during the next annual meeting to address the Secretariat's recommendations in regards to North Pacific albacore and clarifying how to define "current effort". It was agreed that an ad hoc group will convene at the next annual meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) meetings – October 29-30, 2009, at the La Jolla Marriott Hotel.
- IATTC Shark Stock Assessment Workshop – November 2, 2009, at the La Jolla Marriott Hotel.
- IATTC Scientific Workshop on Modeling Population Processes: Natural Mortality, Recruitment, Growth, and Selectivity – November 3-6, 2009, at the La Jolla Marriott.
- WCPFC meetings –
 - Northern Committee Meeting: September 7-10, 2009, in Nagasaki, Japan.

- Technical and Compliance Committee: October 1-6, 2009, in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.
- Commission meeting: December 7-11, 2009, in Papeete, Tahiti.
- IATTC Meeting in 2010 – It was proposed that the next IATTC meeting be held later in the year for 2010 only given that the Antigua Convention will come into force in August 2010. The proposed dates are September 27 - October 1, 2010 in La Jolla, California or in a locale proposed by a host country.