



November 12, 2014

Ms. Dorothy Lowman, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place suite 101
Portland, OR 97220

Dear Ms. Lowman,

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) held its resumed 87th meeting in La Jolla, California, during the week of October 27, 2014. The proposals adopted by the IATTC as well as their discussions about fleet capacity and decisions on administrative matters are summarized below. Notably, the IATTC adopted a Resolution on Pacific bluefin tuna conservation. NOAA Fisheries' initial thoughts on regulatory actions that will be needed as a result of the adopted proposal are also included below.

The United States was represented at this meeting by its four U.S. Commissioners: Don Hansen, Ed Weissman, Dr. Bill Fox, and myself. The Department of State was represented by two staff members: David Hogan, who is also a member of the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), and staff attorney Patrick Pearsall. Council members Marci Yaremko and Buzz Brizendine, as well as Council staff Dr. Kit Dahl, were also in attendance. The rest of the U.S. delegation was comprised of NOAA Fisheries staff, members of the U.S. fishing industry, and non-governmental organizations including Pew Charitable Trusts, World Wildlife Foundation, and the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation.

Resolution C-14-06: *Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean 2015-2016*

The United States, Mexico, and Japan developed a joint proposal to reduce fishing mortality of Pacific bluefin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) in 2015 and 2016 that was consistent with IATTC scientific advice. IATTC member nations adopted the proposal by consensus, taking a critical step in rebuilding this overfished stock. The commercial catch limit represents roughly a 43 percent reduction below the average catch from 2010 to 2012.

Specifically, Resolution C-14-06 sets an EPO catch limit at 6,600 metric tons (mt) for 2015 and 2016 combined. The resolution includes a limit of 600 mt for West Coast commercial fisheries for years 2015 and 2016. Catch of the 600 mt limit is limited to 425 mt in any one of the two years. For example, if the U.S. catches 425 mt in 2015, then catch will be limited to 175 mt in 2016. Potential catch scenarios are presented in the following table.



Potential scenarios for 2015 and 2016 U.S. commercial catch limits of Pacific bluefin tuna (in metric tons) from the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Scenarios	2015 U.S. Commercial Catch (and/or Limit)	2016 U.S. Commercial Limit
1	401-425 mt	175-199 mt (remainder of 600mt catch limit)
2	301-400 mt	200 mt
3	176-300 mt	300-424 mt (remainder of 600mt catch limit)
4	0-175 mt	425 mt (max allowed)

Resolution C-14-06 further recommends cuts to bluefin sport fisheries that are consistent with reductions taken in commercial fisheries for bluefin as well as bi-annual reporting requirements of recreational catch. Per the intent of Resolution C-14-06, the United States will inform the Commission when a decision is reached on domestic reductions for recreational catch of Pacific bluefin tuna in the EPO. The next stock assessment for Pacific bluefin is scheduled for 2016. Based on the results of that stock assessment the IATTC will consider conservation and management measures for 2017 and beyond.

Resolution C-14-06 becomes effective on January 1, 2015; therefore, NOAA Fisheries will develop regulations for 2015 and 2016 to domestically implement Resolution C-14-06 under the Tuna Conventions Act, as amended. Council input for the proposed rule to implement Resolution C-14-06 is welcome during the November Council meeting and during open public comment.

IATTC Performance Review

For several years, the IATTC has been debating whether and how to conduct a performance review to evaluate the Commission's organizational structure, funding streams, work flow processes, and outcomes to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the organization's mission. At the resumed 87th meeting, a proposal was adopted and will be applicable as early as 2015. The details of how and when the performance review will take place will be forthcoming.

Selection of IATTC Executive Director

The Executive Director of the IATTC, Dr. Compeán, was selected in 2007. Several Members of the Commission argued that his term was set to expire in August 2014. The Commission could not agree on a procedure for the reappointment or selection of a director at the 2013 and 2014 meetings of IATTC. However, through an exchange of intersessional letters, the IATTC Members agreed that Dr. Compeán could remain in his position until October 31, 2014.

The final decision made at the resumed 87th meeting included: (1) extending the current Director's term until August 2016; (2) a new procedure for the selection of a director; and (3) an amendment to the IATTC Rules of Procedure that would reassign duties to the Senior Fisheries Management and Policy Advisor under circumstances that prevent the Director from performing his or her duties. The Commission agreed to initiate the process for the selection of a new director, or re-selection of the incumbent Director, when they meet in 2015.

Fleet Capacity

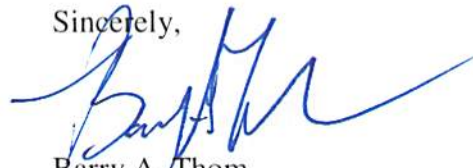
At the 87th resumed meeting of the IATTC, the Commission discussed pending fleet capacity disputes and claims from member nations. The United States and European Union recommended the formation of a separate panel to review capacity requests and emphasized the need for a comprehensive capacity plan for the EPO. The United States reiterated its position that any increases in fish hold capacity should be considered in conjunction with appropriate measures to achieve a conservation balance. There was no consensus on a capacity reduction plan. This topic will likely continue to be discussed at future meetings.

Other Administrative Matters

The IATTC appointed Chairs for the 2015 IATTC meetings. Mr. Dave Hogan of the United States was reappointed as the Chair of the Compliance Working Group; Mr. Luis Torres of Ecuador was appointed Chairman of the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity; and Mr. Lillo Maniscalchi of Venezuela was reappointed Chair of the Committee on Administration and Finance. The IATTC Members conditionally approved the nomination of Guillermo Moran as the Chair of the IATTC, pending the final ratification by Mexico, which was not ready to join consensus on this proposal. Ms. Bryslie Cifuentes from Guatemala was approved as Vice-Chair of the IATTC. Ecuador offered to host the meetings for the IATTC and the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program in 2015. The dates and specific location for the meetings were not determined.

If you have any questions regarding these outcomes, or U.S. positions on these matters, please do not hesitate to contact me at 503-231-6266 or Heidi Taylor at 562-980-4039 or Heidi.Taylor@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



Barry A. Thom

U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC

Cc: Dr. Bill Fox, U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC
Ed Weisman, U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC
Don Hansen, U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC
Dave Hogan, Department of State
Russell Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, NOAA
Michael Tosatto, Regional Administrator, Pacific Islands Regional Office, NOAA Fisheries