



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Region
501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200
Long Beach, California 90802-4213

JUN 21 2000

RECEIVED

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PFMC

Mr. Jim Lone, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council
2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224
Portland, Oregon 97201

Dear Jim,

This is to report on actions taken by the IATTC at its annual meeting held in San Jose, Costa Rica, last week, with actions listed in relation to the topics listed on the enclosed agenda beginning with item 8 (the first action item of interest to the Council). This information will be of interest to the Council and to the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Subpanel, which will meet next week.

8. Work Group on IATTC Convention: The parties approved a letter to the MHLC to indicate that there should be efforts to minimize any geographic areas of overlap between MHLC and the IATTC and that there will need to be cooperation in the management of several species, including north Pacific albacore, bigeye, bluefin, and skipjack tuna. This effectively rejected the Canadian proposal under which the IATTC would endorse the idea that the MHLC "area of competence" could extend to the West Coast for purposes of managing north Pacific albacore.

9. Work Group on Compliance:

- a. A resolution on a regional fishing vessel register will require that NMFS (among other things) provide information for a regional vessel registry. This is likely to result in NMFS having to establish a Federal permit program for the purse seine and longline fisheries in the ETP.
- b. The Southwest Region will have to send to the IATTC within 2 weeks of the effective date any notices in the Federal Register or other forms that implement IATTC recommendations.
- c. Rules of Procedure for the Compliance Committee were approved.

10. Fleet Capacity: No agreement on a permanent limit on purse seine fleet capacity could be reached. The parties agreed to maintain current fleet capacity for a period of 45 days (until roughly July 31), within which the Permanent Working Group on Fleet Capacity is to meet to try to agree to a longer-term fleet capacity limit system to be in place until the IATTC Plan of Action for Management of Fleet Capacity can be developed and implemented. The U.S. continues to remain within the capacity limit agreed to in 1998.



11. Bycatch: A resolution on bycatch was adopted that will result in some management actions, including requirements (in a one-year pilot program) for purse seine vessels to retain on board and land all bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin tuna caught except fish unfit for human consumption, unless there is insufficient well space available; to use special sea turtle handling and release procedures; and to promptly release unharmed, to the extent practicable, all sea turtles, sharks, billfishes, rays, mahimahi, and other non-target species. NMFS would have to establish regulations for these measures.

13. Program and Budget: The fiscal year 2001-2002 program and budget were approved, though it is recognized some elements may change if nations do not fully meet their funding targets.

14. Finance: A resolution on financing the IATTC was approved that set contributions for 2001 and set targets for contributions for 2002. The Finance Work Group (of which Svein Fougner is the Chairman) will meet to develop final recommendations for a formula approach to determining contribution levels in the future. Final adoption by the IATTC would be anticipated in 2001.

15. Fees for Observers: The Finance Work Group will also review and make recommendations concerning the possible setting of fees for observers at IATTC or IATTC-sponsored meetings. While there was general agreement that fees are appropriate, the IATTC wants more information about how fees are set in other areas and how they are administered (by meeting, by year, by type/size of organization, by person or organization).

16. Stock Management Resolutions:

- a. Yellowfin: A quota of 265,000 mt of yellowfin was set, and the directed purse seine fishery will close on the earlier of reaching the quota or December 2, 2000; incidental catches will be allowed after that. Area closures off Baja California and off Colombia, Ecuador and a portion of Peru will be set when the catch reaches 240,000 mt.
- b. Bigeye: The provisional 40,000 mt quota on bigeye tuna adopted in October 1998 has been replaced by a 90-day closure (September 15-December 14) of the fishery on floating objects; however, the floating objects fishery could close earlier if the Director of IATTC announces on August 1 or August 15 that, based on reviews of fishery data, the catch of juvenile bigeye has reached or is expected to reach the level achieved in 1999, in which case the floating objects fishery shall close in another two weeks.

17. Place and Date of Next Meeting: El Salvador, 2001 (although it may be found necessary to have a meeting in October if Work Group meetings result in significant new proposals that warrant immediate consideration by the full Commission). Note that Work Group meetings are being scheduled for Capacity (by July 31), Negotiation of the Convention (Sept. 11-16 in La Jolla), and Finance (tentative Sept. 18-20 in La Jolla).

18. Jean-Francois Pulvenis of Venezuela was elected the next IATTC Chairman, succeeding Svein Fougner.

I will try to have copies of the final resolutions and other documents adopted by the IATTC available at the Council meeting next week.

Sincerely,



Svein Fougner
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Sustainable Fisheries

Enclosure

COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

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66TH MEETING

San Jose, Costa Rica
June 12, 14-15, 2000

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Review of current tuna research
4. The 1999 fishing year
5. Status of tuna and billfish stocks:
 - a) Yellowfin
 - b) Bigeye
 - c) Others
6. Review of tuna-dolphin research and extension programs
7. Consultation on United States International Dolphin Conservation Program Act Finding
8. Report of the working group on the review of the IATTC Convention
9. Report of the working group on compliance
10. Report on the working group on fleet capacity
11. Report of the working group on bycatch
12. Report of the scientific working group
13. Recommended research program and budget for FY 2001-2002
14. Report of the working group on finance
15. Participation fees for observers at IATTC meetings
16. Recommendations and resolutions for 2000
17. Place and date of next meeting
18. Election of officers
19. Other business
20. Adjournment