

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT
ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Below is an update on international issues since the March 2015 Council meeting.

Recent Meetings

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC, or Commission) Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) met May 11-15, 2015. During the meeting, the SAC provided stock status updates and reviewed the IATTC scientific staff's [conservation recommendations](#), and provided additional recommendations available in the [report of the SAC meeting](#).

The General Advisory Committee (GAC) to the U.S. Section of the IATTC and its Scientific Advisory Subcommittee (SAS) met June 2-3, 2015. These two bodies were presented with updates from the IATTC scientific staff, including stock status updates and the [2015 conservation recommendations](#). Additionally, potential U.S. proposals, as well as proposals from other IATTC members, were discussed.

Recommendations from the SAS to the GAC mainly included support for IATTC scientific staff conservation recommendations. The GAC recommendations and comments to the U.S. Section of the IATTC focused on potential proposals for the 89th Meeting of the IATTC.

U.S. Proposals

During the March 2015 Council meeting, NMFS provided a list of potential U.S. priority issues for the 2015 IATTC meeting (see [NMFS Report Agenda Item H.2.c, March 2015](#)). NMFS has since revised this list based on outcomes of the SAC, GAC, and SAS meetings, see below:

- 1) Pacific bluefin tuna rebuilding plan:** The primary rebuilding objectives are to initially rebuild spawning stock biomass (SSB) to 42,592 metric tons by 2024 (i.e., to the historical median for SSB, as stated in the [Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission \(WCPFC\) CMM 2014-04](#)) and to 20 percent of unfished SSB by 2030, and to adopt future management measures that have at least 60 percent probability of achieving these rebuilding objectives. The proposal requests the IATTC to work with the International Scientific Committee to for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific (ISC) to evaluate the performance of candidate management strategies. Further, the proposal specifies that the evaluation of future management strategies would, among other things, address equity issues in considering fishery impacts—e.g., the fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) account for 25 percent and those in the western and central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) for 75percent of the total fishery impact on the SSB. The United States is considering submitting a similar proposal to the Northern Committee at its meeting in September 2015.
- 2) Hammerhead:** The United States submitted an IATTC proposal to prohibit retention of hammerhead sharks of the family *Sphyrnida* caught as bycatch in the EPO and to develop management plans for fisheries that target hammerhead sharks. This proposal is partially in response to the recent ESA-listing of the distinct population segment of the scalloped hammerhead sharks (*Sphyrna lewini*) in the EPO ([79 FR 38214, July 3, 2014](#)). This proposal is similar to the species-specific management measures for [hammerhead shark](#) in the

European Union's (EU's) proposal to the 2013 IATTC annual meeting. Hammerhead shark are commonly caught as bycatch in IATTC purse seine fisheries and some member nations have directed fisheries for them. The IATTC scientific staff attempted a stock assessment in 2014. However, data gaps, including a lack of data from coastal artisanal fisheries that target hammerhead shark in the EPO, prevented its completion.

- 3) **Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) identification:** The United States submitted a proposal in 2015 to amend [Resolution C-13-04](#), which incorporates the 2015 IATTC scientific staff recommendations for a FAD identification scheme. The IATTC adopted a resolution on FADs at its 2013 annual meeting, which included specific steps for the development of a FAD identification scheme. However, the Commission could not agree on the identification scheme for FADs at the 2014 annual meeting. Therefore, the United States is submitting this proposal to address the FAD identification scheme requirements in Resolution C-13-04.
- 4) **Seabird mitigation:** The United States submitted a proposal to amend the current seabird mitigation resolution ([C-11-02](#)). The IATTC scientific staff recommended a revision to the current seabird conservation measure, [Resolution C-11-02](#), such that it would be consistent with current advice from the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) on seabird mitigation techniques (i.e., described in document [SAC-05 INF-E](#)). Specifically, the proposal seeks to replace the approach in C-11-02 by requiring the use of at least two of the following three mitigation methods: line weighting, night setting, and bird-scaring lines. Furthermore, the proposal specifies minimum standards for the mitigation requirements.
- 5) **IUU Vessel list:** Since 2008, the United States has proposed a comprehensive set of revisions to improve the IATTC's IUU listing procedures. The U.S. proposal for the 2015 annual meeting is similar to the 2014 proposal and is intended to improve the existing IATTC resolution ([C-05-07](#)) to establish an IUU vessel list, and harmonize the measures with those of other RFMOs.

Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE)

The Highly Migratory Species Management Team (see [Agenda Item E.1.a, June 2015](#)) submitted a report recommending criteria to be evaluated in a MSE on north Pacific albacore (NPALB) conducted by the ISC. The HMSMT's recommendations encompass criteria listed in the U.S. proposal for a MSE on NPALB submitted at the 2014 IATTC annual meeting (see [Agenda Item I.2.a Attachment 4, November 2014](#)) and include additional criteria. NMFS has since learned that the ISC's Albacore Working Group has agreed to include, in the future MSE, the criteria specified in the United States' 2014 proposal for a MSE.