

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

90th Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

The IATTC and its subsidiary bodies met from June 22 to July 1, 2016, in La Jolla, California. The U.S. delegation included U.S. Commissioners Donald Hansen, Bill Fox, and Edward Weissman, members of the U.S. government, non-governmental organizations, and the fishing industry. Barry Thom, U.S. Commissioner for NOAA and David Hogan from the U.S. Department of State were heads of delegation.

The IATTC elected an Executive Director for an additional four years¹ and adopted seven Resolutions, but was unable to reach consensus on a number of key issues, therefore the IATTC agreed to resume the 90th Meeting from October 12 through 14, 2016, in La Jolla, California to resolve pending issues. Topics at the resumed meeting will include proposals on tropical tunas, Pacific bluefin tuna, a port inspection scheme, observer safety at sea, and seabird mitigation. The following seven proposals were adopted:

- [Resolution C-16-01](#)² (*Amendment of Resolution C-15-03 on the Collection and Analyses of Data on Fish-Aggregating Devices*) was sponsored by the European Union. This Resolution amended C-15-03 by revising the data collection requirements for fish-aggregating devices (FADs) in Annex I, making the Ad Hoc Working Group on FADs permanent, and modifying its objectives. In addition, the Resolution moved the dates for the IATTC scientific staff to provide recommendations on FADs from 2020 to 2018.
- [Resolution C-16-02](#) (*Harvest Control Rules for Tropical Tunas (Yellowfin, Bigeye, and Skipjack)*) adopts the recommendation from the IATTC scientific staff on a harvest control rule (HCR) for tropical tuna species in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). The HCR provides that management measures be established to prevent the interim target reference point from being exceeded. In addition, it provides that management measures be established if the probability that the interim limit reference point will be reached is greater than 10% to prevent the interim limit reference point from being reached and to reduce fishing mortality or to increase spawning stock biomass to the interim target reference point. The Resolution formalizes the existing practice of the IATTC scientific

¹ The incumbent Executive Director, Dr. Guillermo Compean, was reappointed for an additional term through August 2020.

² NMFS West Coast Region is currently preparing a proposed rule to implement Resolutions C-16-01 and C-16-06. NMFS anticipates that this proposed rule will publish in late September 2016 and the 30-day public comment period will close prior to the November 2016 Council meeting.

staff to recommend management measures, such as closure days, if fishing mortality exceeds the maximum sustainable yield for tropical tuna stocks.

- [Resolution C-16-03](#) (*Resolution on Pacific Bluefin Tuna*) established that the IATTC and Northern Committee to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission have a joint working group meeting to discuss the conservation and management of Pacific bluefin tuna. This resolution describes the objectives of the joint meeting, as agreed to by the members of the IATTC, including the importance of a Pacific-wide approach to management of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource. The joint meeting will occur during the Northern Committee meeting to be held from August 29 to September 2, 2016.
- [Resolution C-16-04](#) (*Amendment to the Resolution C-05-03 on the Conservation of Sharks Caught in Association with Fisheries in the Eastern Pacific Ocean*) modified Resolution C-05-03 to identify research priorities related to improving knowledge of shark biology and mitigation techniques that members and cooperating non-members (CPCs) could undertake in coordination with the IATTC scientific staff.
- [Resolution C-16-05](#) (*Resolution on the Management of Shark Species*) requires that the IATTC scientific staff develop a work plan to conduct assessments of silky sharks and hammerhead sharks and establishes data reporting requirements for these species. This measure also establishes handling and safe release guidelines applicable to any shark species, and prohibits longline vessels, whether targeting tuna or swordfish, from using “shark lines³.” This resolution enters into force in January 2018 and will require a rulemaking.
- [Resolution C-16-06](#)⁴ (*Conservation Measures for Shark Species, with Special Emphasis on the Silky Shark (Carcharhinus falciformis), for the Years 2017, 2018, and 2019*) prohibits retention of silky sharks caught in purse seine gear in the EPO. This Resolution also requires longline vessels that do not target sharks to limit the catch of silky sharks to 20 percent in weight per fishing trip. The Resolution also provides further fishing restrictions for silky sharks caught by “surface longliners⁵,” but these will not apply to U.S. longline fisheries.
- [Resolution C-16-07](#) (*Financing Fiscal Year 2017*) is the annual administrative resolution adopting the budget for 2017. The United States contribution of \$1,746,553.00 constitutes 30 percent of the total budget for 2017.

Outcomes from the 16th International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) Plenary

³ For the purposes of Resolution C-16-05, shark lines are defined in the resolution as “individual lines attaches to the floatline or to the floats directly and are used to target sharks.”

⁴ NMFS West Coast Region is currently preparing a proposed rule to implement Resolutions C-16-01 and C-16-06. NMFS anticipates that this proposed rule will publish in late September 2016 and the 30-day public comment period will close prior to the November 2016 Council meeting.

⁵ For the purposes of Resolution C-16-06, surface longlines are defined in this resolution as “surface longlines are those in which the majority of hooks fish at depths shallower than 100 meters and target species other than swordfish.”

NMFS West Coast Region staff attended the [16th ISC Plenary](#) held from July 13 through July 18, 2016, in Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. The documents and reports for ISC16 are available online: http://isc.fra.go.jp/reports/isc/isc16_reports.html.

Bigeye Tuna Closure

On June 18, 2016 ([81 FR 46614](#)), NMFS announced the closure of the U.S. pelagic longline fishery for bigeye tuna for vessels over 24 meters in overall length in the EPO. This action was necessary to prevent the fishery from exceeding the applicable catch limit of 500 metric tons established by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) in Resolution [C-13-01](#), which governs tuna conservation in the EPO from 2014 through 2016. The closure is effective 12 a.m. local time July 25, 2016, through 11:59 p.m. local time December 31, 2016. Vessels must have landed all bigeye tuna by August 8, 2016.

International Meetings

The following RFMO-related meetings are occurring in 2016 (listed below).

IATTC-related Meetings⁶

GAC and SAS	September 23	Conference Call
AIDCP	October 10	La Jolla, CA
Technical Meeting on Tropical Tunas	October 11	La Jolla, CA
Resumed 90th Meeting of the IATTC	October 12 - 14	La Jolla, CA
Dolphin Assessment Workshop	October 18-20	La Jolla, CA

WCPFC-related Meetings⁷

Northern Committee	August 29 - September 2	Fukuoka, Japan
U.S. Delegation (PAC)	October 6 - 7	Honolulu, HI
Annual Meeting	December 5 - 9	Fiji

ISC-related Meetings⁸

Shark Working Group	September 6-7	Webinar
Albacore Working Group	November 8-15	Nanaimo, Canada
Shark Working Group	November 14-21	Korea

⁶ For more information on future meetings, visit: <https://www.iattc.org/MeetingsENG.htm>

⁷ For more information on future meetings, visit: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings>

⁸ For more information on future meetings, visit: http://isc.fra.go.jp/meetings/future_meetings.html