

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON RECOMMEND
INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Overview of Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) - 93rd Meeting

The [93rd meeting](#) of the IATTC took place in San Diego, California on August 24 and August 27-30, 2018. The U.S. delegation, led by U.S. Federal Commissioner Ryan Wulff, included U.S. Commissioners Bill Fox, Mike Thompson, and Ed Weissman. Also represented were the U.S. Department of State, Department of Commerce (including NMFS West Coast Region and Science Center staff), U.S. Coast Guard, the two Councils, State of California, industry, and non-governmental organizations. [Topics of discussion](#) included:

- a. A review of scientific information and research plans from IATTC scientific staff. Much of this information was discussed at the Scientific Advisory Committee meeting in May 2018. The topic with the most interest was the stock assessment of bigeye tuna. The United States committed to fund a workshop with IATTC and WCPFC staff to compare ageing techniques, which will contribute to the revised assessment.
- b. An overview of the outcomes of the various working groups.
- c. A review of the implementation of Resolution C-14-02 (amended) on the establishment of a vessel monitoring system (VMS), and consideration of an IATTC-centralized VMS program. It was decided that a more thorough analysis was needed.
- d. A discussion on how to proceed with the Action Plan for the implementation of the Performance Review recommendations and Strategic Plan. It was decided that an *ad hoc* virtual working group would be established to manage the Commission's next steps.
- e. Discussions on twenty proposals spanning topics including sharks, port state measures, marine pollution, longline observers, confidentiality, bluefin tuna, and observer safety, a working group for juvenile tunas, and revisions to current Resolutions on data provisions, albacore, and the vessel register. Of the six Resolutions adopted by the IATTC, five were sponsored by the United States. More information on adopted Resolutions is below.

Adopted Resolutions

[Japan \(and European Union\) Proposal B-2A](#)

PROPOSAL TO AMEND [RESOLUTION C-14-01](#)

This Resolution includes an expansion of existing International Maritime Organization (IMO) requirements for IATTC-authorized motorized inboard fishing vessels (except for recreational fishing vessels) of less than 100 gross tons (GT) or 100 gross registered tons (GRT), down to a size limit of 12 meters in length. NMFS previously published regulations in [February 2016](#) to implement IATTC Resolution [C-14-01](#), which requires IMO numbers for fishing vessels authorized to fish in the IATTC Convention Area that are at least 100 GT or 100 GRT. NMFS intends to publish regulations to implement the new IATTC requirements for IMO numbers for smaller vessels through proposed and final rulemaking. The effective date of this provision is January 1, 2020. NMFS estimates that approximately 120 troll or baitboat vessels, and about 50 longline vessels with High Seas Fisheries Compliance Act permits, would be impacted by IMO requirements under the revised Resolution.

This Resolution also includes an additional revision to C-14-01 that requires the United States to annually submit a list of its vessels on the IATTC [Regional Vessel Register](#) that were active in the Convention Area in the prior year. This list of active vessels is intended for the Secretariat's information and analysis and will not be published. Similar information is submitted in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) and International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). This does not require a rulemaking, but is simply a data submission by NMFS, on behalf of the United States, to the IATTC Director.

U.S. Proposal J-1A

AMENDMENT TO [RESOLUTION C-13-03](#) SUPPLEMENTING [RESOLUTION C-05-02](#) ON NORTH PACIFIC ALBACORE

This Resolution amends Resolution C-13-03 to require an annual data submission. IATTC members and cooperating non-members (CPCs) are expected to provide catch and effort data for the previous five years by December 1, 2018. CPCs are required to submit annual updates by June 30 each year thereafter. This amendment also removes the requirement to submit catch data semi-annually under Resolution C-05-02, as the annual reporting now required under Resolution C-13-03 is more comprehensive. This Resolution is administrative in nature and will not require rulemaking.

U.S. Proposal L-1B

AMENDMENT OF [RESOLUTION C-16-01](#) ON THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSES OF DATA ON FISH-AGGREGATING DEVICES (FADs)

This Resolution amends the existing IATTC Resolution on FADs ([C-16-01](#)). The amended Resolution includes specific requirements for FAD materials and designs, such as smaller mesh size and rolled netting, to reduce entanglements of marine life. NMFS is already partially compliant with this Resolution due to existing regulations published on April 11, 2018 ([83 FR 15503](#)). However, NMFS intends to revise these regulations for consistency with the amended Resolution. The effective date of this provision is January 1, 2019.

U.S. Proposal M-1A

AMENDMENT TO [RESOLUTION C-16-08](#) ON A LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN

This Resolution focuses on long-term management of the Pacific bluefin stock. Specifically, this resolution adopted the outcomes of the 2nd Joint IATTC-WCPFC Northern Committee Working Group, which convened in August 2017. This includes rebuilding targets, recruitment scenario assumptions for projections performed by the ISC, and conditions during which catch increases may be considered. Additionally, this resolution includes provisions to address under-harvest and over-harvest of catch limits that are specified in a subsequent Pacific bluefin proposal (below).

U.S. Proposal M-2B

MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN, 2019 AND 2020

This Resolution specifies Pacific bluefin catch limits for Mexico and the United States in 2019 and 2020. The United States has a commercial limit of 600 metric tons and Mexico's catch limit is tentatively 5,600 metric tons. However, any overharvest of catch limits

established in Resolution C-16-08 will be deducted from the catch limit in this new Resolution. The IATTC agreed to review this measure at the next annual meeting, taking into consideration outcomes of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC Northern Committee Working Group that concluded on September 6, 2018.

NMFS will develop a proposed and final rulemaking to implement the 600 metric tons catch limit. In 2017, in accordance with a Council recommendation ([November 2016](#)), NMFS implemented a 25 mt trip limit until catch was within 50 mt of the annual limit (e.g., 375 mt of the 425 mt annual limit in 2017), at which time a 2 mt trip limit would be imposed ([82 FR 18704, April 21, 2017](#)). Catches by U.S. commercial vessels exceeded the limit in 2017 before the fishery was closed ([82 FR 40720, August 28, 2017](#)). Consequently, NMFS imposed strict trip limits in 2018 ([83 FR 13203, March 28, 2018](#)). NMFS requests the Council consider and provide recommendations on domestic implementation of the catch limits; specifically, the Council could consider if updated management measures for 2019 and 2020 are needed to avoid exceeding limits.

U.S. Proposal N-1B

RESOLUTION ON IMPROVING OBSERVER SAFETY AT SEA: EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

This Resolution includes requirements for an emergency action plan for observers in both the Regional Observer Program for transshipment and the National Observer Programs for IATTC authorized longline vessels. The Resolution outlines procedures for CPCs and vessels in the event of accident or injury to the observer. NMFS is evaluating the need for regulations to implement these requirements through proposed and final rulemaking. The effective date of this Resolution is January 1, 2020.