

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
YELLOWFIN TUNA OVERFISHING RESPONSE

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) received a presentation from Dr. Carolina Minte-Vera (Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, IATTC) highlighting the main research and data needs to improve Eastern Pacific Ocean yellowfin tuna assessments. Dr. Minte-Vera also described a work plan developed by the IATTC staff to address several of the key issues before the upcoming yellowfin tuna benchmark assessment in 2020. The SSC reviewed the merits of the proposed work plan and offered guidance on additional analyses.

The SSC considers the tasks laid out in the work plan useful for addressing many of the key assessment issues including spatial stock structure, the development of fishery-dependent indices of abundance, growth estimation, natural mortality, and fleet selectivity. In particular, the IATTC should identify specific tasks in the work plan that will help better understand the sensitivity of the yellowfin tuna model to the addition of the 2018 southern longline catch per unit of effort index of abundance, which lead to a large change in stock status in the 2019 update assessment relative to the 2018 assessment.

The SSC recommends that the Council work with the IATTC to obtain raw (rather than spatially aggregated) catch and effort data from nations operating longline fleets, which will allow the incorporation of fleet behavior (e.g., vessel effects) and expand the capability of the spatio-temporal analytical methods used for index development.

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