

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT ON
INTERNATIONAL HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES ACTIVITIES

Outcomes of 2020 Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Meetings

The IATTC met virtually from November 30-December 4, 2020, for the 95th Annual Meeting, and on December 23, 2020, for the 96th Extraordinary Meeting. During the 95th Annual Meeting, the IATTC adopted four resolutions, including C-20-02 on Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) applicable to 2021. The IATTC was unable to reach consensus on a tropical tuna measure for 2021. The other three resolutions adopted were administrative in nature. The PBF resolution essentially rolled over the previous 2-year resolution (C-18-01), with some adjustments due to C-20-02 being applicable only to a single year. The PBF Resolution provides the United States with a 2021 catch limit of 425 mt and Mexico with a limit of 3,500 mt. NMFS Report 1 under Agenda Item H.1 contains details on the proposed rule to implement this Resolution. The IATTC also agreed that the IATTC staff should hold an electronic monitoring workshop, as well as a meeting of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures Adopted by the IATTC, to evaluate CPC compliance with measures in 2019 by the spring of 2021.

The failure of the IATTC to reach consensus on tropical tunas at its November meeting created an urgent situation because the tropical tuna management measures were set to expire at the end of the 2020 calendar year, and no measures would have been in place for the start of the 2021 fishing season. Therefore, the IATTC convened the 96th Extraordinary Meeting of the IATTC on December 22 to adopt tropical tuna management measures. The IATTC ultimately adopted Resolution C-20-05 (*Resolution on Conservation and Management Measures of Tropical Tunas in 2021*), which rolls over the provisions of the previous Resolution C-17-02 (*Resolution on Conservation and Management Measures of Tropical Tunas in 2018-2020*) for 2021 only. NMFS Report 1 under Agenda Item H.1 contains more information on the interim final rule implementing this resolution. The IATTC also agreed to convene additional meetings in 2021 to discuss tropical tuna measures for 2022 and beyond. In particular, the IATTC agreed it should hold a Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) Working Group meeting, an MSE Workshop for tropical tuna, and an extraordinary IATTC meeting by June 2021 to discuss tropical tuna measures.

Initial Priorities for IATTC in 2021

As measures for tropical tunas and PBF were adopted only for 2021, the IATTC will need to adopt measures applicable to 2022 and possibly beyond to avoid a lapse in measures. Additionally, the IATTC has yet to elect a new Director after Dr. Guillermo Compeán's term expired in August 2020. Since then, the IATTC's senior policy advisor, Jean-François Pulvenis, has been acting as the Director. His term was extended during the November 2020 IATTC Meeting for an additional 6 months, or until a new Director is selected. NMFS anticipates the IATTC will consider how to complete the selection process (e.g., interviews, voting by members) in 2021.

North Pacific Albacore Management Strategy Evaluation Workshop

The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean Albacore Working Group (ALBWG) has completed the North Pacific Ocean Albacore Management Strategy Evaluation (NPALB MSE). Representatives of the ALBWG have been

tasked with providing the MSE results to stakeholders in their respective countries. The United States will be holding a joint virtual workshop with Canada’s representatives and stakeholders from March 22-25, 2021, 9:30am-12:30pm. The aim of this workshop is to present the results of the MSE and assist stakeholders in understanding how to interpret and utilize the final results of the MSE. Contact Steve Teo (Southwest Fisheries Science Center) at Steve.Teo@noaa.gov with any questions about the upcoming workshop.

Upcoming Meetings

IATTC-related Meetings¹

Extraordinary Meeting of the Compliance Committee	Mar 31 - Apr 1	Virtual
Workshop on Electronic Monitoring	Apr 29-30	Virtual
Workshop in MSE for Tropical Tunas	May 3-4	Virtual
Bycatch Working Group (WG)	May 5	Virtual
Meeting of the WG on FADs	May 6-7	Virtual
Scientific Advisory Committee	May 10-14	Virtual
Extraordinary Meeting of the IATTC	Jun 7-10	Virtual
Annual Meetings of the IATTC and AIDCP	Aug 16-27	Nicaragua

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)²

Scientific Committee	Aug 11-19	Palau
Technical and Compliance Committee	Sep 22-28	Pohnpei, FSM

International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)-related meetings³

NPALB MSE Workshop	Mar 22-25	Virtual
ISC Plenary	Jul 14-19	Kona, HI

¹ For more information on IATTC future meetings, visit: <https://www.iatcc.org/MeetingsENG.htm>

² For more information on WCPFC future meetings, visit: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings>

³ For more information on ISC future meetings, visit: http://isc.fra.go.jp/meetings/future_meetings.html