

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

Outcomes of the 98th (continued) Meeting of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)

The IATTC held its Continued 98th Meeting virtually from October 18-22, 2021. Ryan Wulff (NMFS) and David Hogan (U.S. Department of State) led the U.S. delegation, which included representatives of industry, non-governmental organizations, and state and federal governments. The IATTC had a number of proposals on the table from the August meeting, including a proposal to improve data collection on longline vessels, port State measures (e.g., port inspection scheme), revisions to transshipment monitoring, and a proposal to consolidate shark management measures. Because the meeting primarily focused on the expiring resolutions for tropical tuna and Pacific bluefin tuna, there was minimal time for discussion of the other proposals.

The IATTC adopted five Resolutions in October. These five are in addition to the three Resolutions adopted at the August meeting that included an amendment to the long-term Pacific bluefin tuna Resolution ([C-21-01](#)) and electronic monitoring Resolutions ([C-21-02](#) and [C-21-03](#)). NMFS reported on the three Resolutions adopted in August during the September 2021 Council meeting (see [Supplemental NMFS Report 1, Agenda Item D.2.b](#)). The Resolutions adopted in October are described below and posted on the [IATTC website](#).

1. Tropical tuna (C-21-04). The Commission adopted a three-year Resolution containing commercial fishing management measures for tropical tunas (i.e., yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack tuna) caught by large purse seine and longline fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean. In addition to the status quo measures, new measures include an annual individual vessel (IVL) bigeye tuna limit for purse seine vessels (i.e., 1,200 metric tons of bigeye tuna per vessel, per year), with corresponding penalties of extended closure days for exceeding the limit. The Resolution includes a gradual reduction in the number of active fish aggregating devices (FADs) purse seine vessels monitor at sea, controls on FAD buoy deactivations/activations, and additional FAD buoy data reporting requirements. The Resolution also includes an enhanced IATTC port sampling program to monitor the IVL bigeye catch by purse seine vessels. The Commission members agreed to pay additional funds to support a six-month pilot port sampling program in 2022, and additional funds will be negotiated at meetings in 2022. This Resolution requires a rulemaking and NMFS anticipates publishing the proposed rule in late December 2021.
2. Pacific bluefin tuna (C-21-05). The Commission adopted a Resolution that maintains management measures, such as reporting, in previous resolutions and increases catch limits consistent with the Joint IATTC-Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee Working Group recommendations. These new limits begin to adjust the distribution of catch between the U.S. and Mexico. The U.S. catch limit for 2021-2022 is 739 mt, not to exceed 523 mt in a single year. For 2023-2024, the catch limit is 1,017 mt, not to exceed 720 mt in a single year. As in previous resolutions, a member may carry under-harvest from the previous biennium in an amount not to exceed 5 percent of the previous catch limit. For example, the United States may add 5 percent of 600 mt (i.e., 30

mt) from 2019-2020 to the 2021-2022 biennial catch limit. This resolution requires a rulemaking and NMFS intends to publish the proposed rule in December 2021.

3. Silky shark (C-21-06). The Commission adopted a two-year extension of the existing silky shark Resolution with minor revisions. The U.S. fleet will not be subject to new requirements. This resolution requires a rulemaking and NMFS intends to publish the proposed rule in December 2021.
4. Port State Measures (C-21-07). The Commission adopted a Resolution that will require, among other things, port State inspection of a minimum of 5 percent of foreign fishing vessels in port; communication of detected illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) activity to the flag and coastal States; and investigation by the flag State of detected IUU activity. This resolution, which has been proposed since 2010 implements new requirements and advances key elements of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing, which the United States ratified in 2016. NMFS is evaluating whether a rulemaking is necessary. See the [NOAA Fisheries website](#) for more information about this agreement.
5. Budget (C-21-08). This resolution agrees to the IATTC’s budget and member contributions for fiscal year 2022.

In addition to these Resolutions, the IATTC also adopted the U.S. recommendations to the 12th Meeting of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures adopted by the Commission (Compliance Committee). These recommendations are aimed at improving the compliance review process, along with other matters, and include an intersessional workshop to consider the review process that is expected to be held before the next Compliance Committee meeting in summer 2022.

Upcoming 2021 Meetings (virtual) and Deadlines

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <u>IATTC</u> | |
| U.S. SAS and GAC Nominations Submission Deadline ¹ | Nov 29 |
| 2nd Electronic Monitoring Workshop | Dec 13-15 |
| <u>WCPFC</u> | |
| Regular Session of the Commission | Nov 28-Dec 6 |

¹ NMFS is soliciting nominations for the General Advisory Committee and its Scientific Advisory Subcommittee to the U.S. delegation to the IATTC. Nominations must be submitted to NMFS WCR by November 29, 2021. See the Federal Register Notice for instructions and more information: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/09/27/2021-20803/nominations-for-the-2022-2025-general-advisory-committee-and-the-scientific-advisory-subcommittee-to>