

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

This report provides a preliminary look at U.S. priorities for upcoming Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) meetings in 2022. This report also discusses U.S. stakeholder meetings that NMFS will host which will inform discussions anticipated at the meetings of the IATTC, Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC), and Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group (JWG) on Pacific Bluefin Tuna in 2022. Lastly, this report provides a list of upcoming meetings related to international management of highly migratory species (see page 3 of this report).

### **Preliminary U.S. Priorities for the IATTC**

*Executive Director:* The IATTC has not been able to hold an in-person meeting to select a 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 recently extended for an additional 6 months to August 2022, or until a new Director is selected. The IATTC plans to hold an in-person extraordinary meeting to vote for the selection of the Director, but the date is to be determined.

*Defining Large Circle Hook:* The IATTC adopted Resolution C-19-04 (*Resolution to Mitigate Impacts on Sea Turtles*), which, among other things, established a timeline for the Bycatch Working Group to recommend a minimum circle hook size that mitigates bycatch of sea turtles. The Bycatch Working Group was unable to reach consensus on circle hook size in 2021, and the IATTC is convening a virtual workshop to discuss circle hooks on March 7-8, 2022. If the Bycatch Working Group and Scientific Advisory Committee provide recommendations to the Commission, the Commission may consider amending Resolution C-19-04 to define a large circle hook.

*Compliance:* The IATTC adopted a recommendation from the Compliance Committee that was initially proposed by the United States to convene a workshop to explore how the IATTC may strengthen the IATTC compliance review process. This workshop is expected to occur on July 6-8, 2022.

*North Pacific Albacore Harvest Strategy:* The International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) completed a management strategy evaluation for North Pacific albacore (NPALB) in 2021. The United States is interested in making progress toward developing a harvest strategy for NPALB, which may include consideration of limit and target reference points in 2022. NMFS is hosting a virtual U.S. stakeholder meeting on April 5, 2022, to discuss harvest strategy options with a focus on preparing to potentially propose limit and target reference points to the IATTC. See the [Federal Register notice](#) for more information, including how to register for the meeting.

### **U.S. Stakeholder Meetings**

In addition to the NPALB stakeholder meeting mentioned above, NMFS is hosting two virtual Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF) U.S. stakeholder meetings in 2022.

- 1) April 1, 2022: This meeting is intended to discuss the long-term harvest strategy for PBF. During the 6th Meeting of the JWG on July 27-29, 2021, Japan Time, the ISC recommended that if the JWG intends to proceed with development of a long-term harvest strategy, the JWG consider management objectives, and metrics by which to measure whether a proposed long-term harvest strategy meets those management objectives. This April 1 meeting is to prepare for anticipated discussions at the 2022 meeting of the JWG regarding the process and information needed to evaluate the effectiveness of potential harvest strategies. See the [Federal Register](#) notice for additional information, including how to register for the meeting.
- 2) May 4, 2022: This meeting, which will be facilitated by Kearns & West, is intended to follow meetings held in [2019](#) and [2020](#) and focus on domestic management of PBF. This meeting will also likely provide a brief summary of the April 1 meeting, and offer additional opportunity for public comment on the long-term harvest strategy discussion.

## Upcoming Meetings

<u><i>IATTC-related Meetings</i></u>	
1st Circle Hook Workshop	Mar 7-8 (virtual)
3rd Electronic Monitoring System Workshop	April 25-27 (virtual)
11th Meeting of the Bycatch Working Group	May 10-11
6th Meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on FADs	May 12-13
Workshop on Compliance	July 6-8
Annual Meetings of the IATTC	August 15-26
Meetings of the ADICP	October 17-18
<u><i>WCPFC</i></u>	
Scientific Committee	Aug 10-18
Technical and Compliance Committee	Sep 21-27
<u><i>ISC</i></u>	
PBF Working Group	Mar 8-11, 15-18 (virtual)
NPALB Working Group	Mar TBD
Plenary	Jul 13-18 (Hawaii)
<i>U.S. Stakeholder Meetings</i>	
PBF Stakeholder Meeting (Long-term Harvest Strategy)	Apr 1 (virtual)
NPALB Stakeholder Meeting	Apr 5 (virtual)
PBF Stakeholder Meeting (Domestic management)	May 4 (virtual)