

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) REPORT 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 scheduled for August 7-11, 2023. This report also discusses U.S. stakeholder meetings that NMFS will host to inform discussions at 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 (PBF) in 2023. Lastly, this report provides a list of upcoming meetings related to international management of highly migratory species.

Potential U.S. priorities for the IATTC meeting

Circle hook size: The United States intends to continue prioritizing this issue at the Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch (EBWG) and Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings. The U.S. will consider submitting a proposal to the Commission to define circle hook size for longline vessels.

North Pacific albacore (NPALB): In 2022, the IATTC and WCPFC adopted a harvest strategy for NPALB, and set a timeline to adopt harvest control rules in 2023. The results of a February 15th meeting on NPALB will inform next steps on harvest control rules. The U.S. may submit a proposal on NPALB harvest strategies for the consideration of the IATTC.

Non-entangling Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs): The 7th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on FADs will occur in May 2023. Results of this working group and subsequent recommendations from SAC will inform priorities regarding non-entangling FADs. The U.S. may submit a proposal on non-entangling FADs that aligns with the WCPFC measures.

Albacore E-logbooks

The WCPFC adopted CMM 2022-06 that requires “an accurate electronic log of every day [a vessel] spends on the high seas of the [WCPFC] Convention Area.” This requirement becomes effective for U.S. troll vessels in January 2025 (See Agenda Item I.2.b, NMFS Report 1). From 2017 to 2021, between 10 and 19 U.S. West Coast-based troll vessels fished for albacore in the WCPFC Convention Area each year. NMFS is considering how best to implement these e-reporting requirements for the West Coast-based albacore troll fleet fishing in the WCPFC Convention Area. NMFS will provide an update at the next appropriate Council meeting.

US-Canada Albacore Tuna Treaty Negotiations

Virtual and in-person consultations between the United States and Canada were held in Vancouver, BC, on November 8, 2022, to begin negotiations on a potential new regime for 2023 and beyond. An additional virtual consultation was held on January 17, 2023. Both were attended by U.S. industry and government representatives. The U.S. expects to host an in-person negotiating session in Seattle, Washington in March or April 2023.

Upcoming meetings

<u><i>IATTC-related Meetings</i></u>	
U.S. Stakeholder Webinar on PBF Harvest Strategy (hosted by NMFS)	April 19, 2023 (Tentative; virtual)
5th Workshop of an Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) in the EPO	April 24-26, 2023
12th Meeting of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG)	May 12, 2023 (La Jolla, CA)
7th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on FADs	May 13, 2023 (La Jolla, CA)
14th Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)	May 15-19, 2023 (La Jolla, CA)
U.S. Scientific Advisory Subcommittee and General Advisory Committee	June 15, 2023 (TBD)
4th Technical Meeting on Catch Documentation Scheme for PBF	July 3, 2023 (Fukuoka, Japan)
Joint IATTC-WCPFC Northern Committee	July 4-5, 2023 (Fukuoka, Japan)
Annual Meetings of the IATTC and AIDCP	July 31 - August 11, 2023 (Canada)
<u><i>WCPFC</i></u>	
Northern Committee Part I	July 6-7, 2023 (Fukuoka, Japan)
Scientific Committee	August 16-24, 2023
Technical and Compliance Committee	September 20-26, 2023
Northern Committee Part II	TBD (virtual)
<u><i>ISC</i></u>	
Albacore Working Group	March 20-28, 2023
PBF Working Group	March 21-24, 2023
ISC Plenary	July 12-17, 2023
<u><i>US-Canada Albacore Tuna Treaty</i></u>	
Delegation Negotiations for a Fishing Regime to apply 2023	March /April 2023 TBD, Seattle, WA