

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

This report provides a summary of completed rulemakings as well as rulemakings to implement Inter-American Tropical Tuna (IATTC) resolutions that NMFS is planning to complete before the March Council meeting.

Amendment 8 Revisions to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) in the Fishery Management Plan

On October 21, 2024, NMFS approved Amendment 8 to the Fishery Management Plan for West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP). This Amendment updates the essential fish habitat provisions in the HMS FMP. The Amendment is intended to promote the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which mandates that each FMP describe and identify EFH for the fishery, and requires periodic review and revision of EFH components of FMPs as warranted based on available information. For additional details see the regulations portal page [here](#).

IATTC Tropical Tuna Proposed Rule

NMFS plans to publish a proposed rule in late November to implement provisions in [Resolution C-24-01](#) (*Conservation Measures For Tropical Tunas In The Eastern Pacific Ocean During 2025-2026*). The IATTC adopted this resolution at its September 2024 meeting. These regulations would apply to large purse seine vessels of class sizes 4-6 (i.e., vessels with a carrying capacity of 182 metric tons (mt) or greater) and longline vessels greater than 24 meters (m) in overall length that fish for tropical tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). Most of the measures in Resolution C-24-01 do not need to be implemented through this proposed rule because they are already codified in U.S. regulations and are not set to expire. These continuing measures include maintaining a 750 mt catch limit on bigeye tuna caught by longline vessels, maintaining the prohibition on large purse seine vessels from fishing for tropical tuna in the IATTC Convention Area for a period of 72 days, and maintaining a closure period (i.e., the Corralito closure) for the tropical tuna purse seine fishery from October 9 to November 8. The proposed rule would remove years referenced in two regulations, so that the regulations remain in effect for 2025 and future calendar years unless the measures are amended or replaced by a future IATTC Resolution. These regulations include additional closure days for large purse seine vessels that exceed specified annual catch levels for bigeye tuna in the EPO, and restrictions on active Fish Aggregating Device limits. This proposed rule is necessary for the conservation of tropical tuna stocks in the EPO and for the United States to satisfy its obligations as a member of the IATTC.

Pacific Bluefin Tuna Proposed Rule

Following Council discussion at this meeting, NMFS plans to publish a proposed rule in January to implement provisions in IATTC [Resolution C-24-02](#) (*Measures for the Conservation and Management of Pacific bluefin tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean*). The IATTC adopted this resolution at its September 2024 meeting. As outlined in [Agenda Item H.2.a, NMFS Report 1](#), this rulemaking will establish annual and biennial catch limits for the 2025-2026 management cycle, along with trip limits and reporting requirements. This proposed rule is necessary for the United States to satisfy its obligations as a member of the IATTC.