

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

This report summarizes the outcomes and the agendas of Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) workshops, working groups, and the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting. This report also provides updates on the U.S.-Canada North Pacific Albacore Treaty negotiations, meeting to discuss a Joint Working Group on South Pacific albacore, and the updated schedule of international meetings.

2nd Circle Hook Workshop

The IATTC and Co-Chairs of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group hosted a 2nd virtual Circle Hook Workshop from April 28 to 30, 2025. The main objective of the workshop was to define large circle hook size for shallow set longline fisheries in an effort to satisfy requirements of Resolution [C-19-04](#) (*Resolution to Mitigate Impact on Sea Turtles*). The participants heard presentations on circle hook size and impacts to sea turtles along with best handling techniques. The Working Group discussed, but ultimately could reach no consensus on a large circle hook size. The Workshop participants developed recommendations for the SAC that included requesting members provide the size of circle hook used in longline fisheries to the IATTC. More meeting information, including the Chair's report can be found [here](#).

Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group

The 3rd Meeting of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group took place May 26 through May 27, 2025, in La Jolla, California. The Working Group reviewed presentations on climate, deep sea mining, sharks, seabirds, best handling and release practices of sea turtles. The Working Group developed recommendations related to these topics for the consideration of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). More details regarding this meeting can be found [here](#).

Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) Working Group

The 9th Meeting of the Working Group on Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) took place May 28 through May 29, 2025, in La Jolla, California. The Working Group reviewed and discussed presentations on biodegradable FADs and initiatives to reduce impacts through the recovery of FADs. The Working Group developed recommendations for the consideration of the SAC and the Commission that included expanding the area where FAD buoys are required to remain active to assist with FAD recoveries. More details regarding this meeting can be found [here](#).

Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Workshop and Working Group

The 5th Workshop on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for Tropical Tunas and 1st Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on MSE took place May 30 through May 31, 2025, in La

Jolla, California. The IATTC scientific staff presented a proposed harvest strategy for bigeye tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean ([SAC-16-06](#)) at both the Workshop and Working Group. The Working Group participants discussed potential management objectives, reference points for the IATTC scientific staff to begin MSE testing. However, several countries voiced concern that they were not prepared to have these discussions and requested more time to discuss these components with their stakeholders. The Working Group is planning to hold a virtual meeting in early August to finalize the Workplan for the MSE prior to the September Commission meeting. More details regarding this meeting can be found [here](#).

Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)

The IATTC SAC meeting is being held from June 2 through June 6, 2025, in La Jolla, California. The IATTC Scientific Staff will present stock assessments for yellowfin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), stock status indicators for tropical tuna, a proposed bigeye tuna harvest strategy, as well as other bycatch related information. The IATTC Scientific Staff will present science and management recommendations for 2025 and the SAC participants will develop recommendations for the consideration of the Commission in late August. More details regarding this meeting can be found [here](#).

U.S.-Canada North Pacific Albacore Treaty

The United States and Canada will not have a reciprocal fishing and port access regime under the Pacific Albacore Tuna Treaty for 2025. The Department of State will continue to pursue a waiver to proceed with legally binding negotiations for 2026, and a stakeholder call will be scheduled for fall 2025 to discuss progress on these issues.

North Pacific Albacore U.S. stakeholder meeting

NMFS WCR and PIRO hosted a U.S. stakeholder webinar on Friday, April 25th. The objective of the webinar was to gather input from participants on translating fishing intensity into the harvest strategies for North Pacific albacore (NPALB) recently adopted by the IATTC and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), and on draft criteria for identifying exceptional circumstances. The webinar also included a brief introduction to e-logbook applications. NMFS has updated the [West Coast Region HMS Logbook webpage](#) with instructions on how to download and use the first publicly available e-logbook application. NMFS also posed a series of focus questions to participants, and used the input received during the webinar to draft the Albacore Webinar Summary Report (Agenda Item F.2.a Supplemental NMFS Report 2).

South Pacific Albacore

At its November 2024 meeting, the WCPFC endorsed the delegation paper put forward by the United States on a [framework](#) for terms of reference to establish a Joint Working Group (JWG) for South Pacific albacore between the WCPFC and IATTC. The WCPFC and IATTC

Commission Chairs combined draft terms of reference to form a South Pacific Albacore JWG in 2025. A virtual meeting was held May 19, 2025, for the Chairs to review the draft terms of reference and develop a timeline and work plan for 2026. The Terms and Conditions will be presented to the IATTC and WCPFC for adoption at upcoming meetings in early September and December and include a plan to hold its first meeting in early 2026.

Upcoming international meetings

(See below for list of acronyms)

<u>IATTC-related meetings</u>	
Scientific Advisory Committee	June 2-6, 2025 (San Diego, CA)
Intersessional Meeting of the Committee on Administration and Finance (Extraordinary)	June 23, 2025 (virtual)
2nd Intersessional Meeting of the IATTC-WCPFC/Northern Committee JWG on Pacific Bluefin Tuna	June 26, 2025 (virtual)
10th Meeting of the IATTC-WCPFC//Northern Committee JWG on Pacific Bluefin Tuna	July 9-12 (Japan)
Northern Committee 21	July 14-15 (Japan)
U.S. Advisory Committees (Scientific Advisory Subcommittee and General Advisory Committee)	July 30-31, 2025 (virtual)
Annual meetings of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, of the IATTC, and Subsidiary Bodies	August 25-Sep 5, 2025 (Panama)

<u>International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)</u>	
ISC 25	June 17-20 (Korea)