

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

***Updates on Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) Regulations***

On December 6, 2018, NMFS published a final rule ([83 FR 62732](#)) to implement Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Resolution C-18-05 (*Amendment of Resolution C-16-01 on the Collection of Data on Fish Aggregating Devices*), which became effective January 7, 2019. This action was necessary for the United States to satisfy its obligations as a member of the IATTC. These regulations apply to U.S. commercial purse seine vessels fishing for tropical tuna (bigeye, skipjack, and yellowfin) in the IATTC Convention Area. The final rule revised the existing regulations on FAD designs for consistency with the new Resolution, by further specifying materials and designs that must be used to reduce entanglement on FADs. In addition, this rule revised the definition of “Active FAD” and regulations related to activating FADs at sea that were codified in an April 2018 rule ([83 FR 15503](#)).

***Updates on Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF) Catch Limits and Fishing Regulations***

On December 27, 2018, NMFS published a proposed rule under the Tuna Conventions Act of 1950 to implement IATTC Resolution C-18-01 (*Measures for the Conservation and Management of Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, 2019-2020*) and Resolution C-18-02 (*Amendment to Resolution C-16-08 on a Long-term Management Framework for the Conservation and Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna in the Eastern Pacific Ocean*) (83 FR 66665). This proposed rule would implement annual limits on commercial catch of Pacific bluefin tuna in the eastern Pacific Ocean for 2019 and 2020. NMFS also sought comment on the Council’s November 2018 recommendation regarding these Resolutions ([November 2018 Decision Summary](#)). As a result of the U.S. government partial lapse in appropriations, the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](#) that was cited in the proposed rule as a method to provide public comments was not active during the comment period. Therefore, NMFS has decided to reopen the period for public comment for an additional 15 days. NMFS anticipates this Notice publishing in advance of the March Council meeting.

***U.S. Stakeholder Meeting on Pacific Bluefin Tuna***

NMFS is exploring options to reschedule a meeting to discuss a long-term domestic management framework of Pacific bluefin tuna. This meeting will likely occur in May 2019 and outcomes provided during the June Council Meeting.

***U.S. Updates to the 2019 Active and Inactive Purse Seine Vessel Registers***

U.S. purse seine vessels must be listed on the IATTC Regional Vessel Register (RVR) to purse seine for tuna in the EPO, and the number of vessels allowed on the RVR is constrained by the U.S. well volume capacity limit. Vessel owners must request each year to be listed as active or inactive on the RVR. Requests to be added to the RVR may be made as early as August 1 for the following year. NMFS submits an annual list of vessels to be included on the RVR to the IATTC based on available well volume capacity, the hierarchy of requests consistent with regulations at 50 CFR 300.22(b), and possession of the necessary permits and payment of the vessel assessment

fee, if applicable. As of February 11, 2019, there were 33 U.S. purse seine vessels on the RVR, with 14 cubic meters of available well volume capacity remaining.

### **International Meetings in 2019**

Below is a list of the 2019 international meetings related to Pacific HMS in which United States government representatives will participate.

#### ***IATTC and Joint Regional Fishery Management Organization (RFMO)-related Meetings<sup>1</sup>***

External review of stock assessment of bigeye tuna in the EPO	March 11-15	La Jolla, CA
Joint Tuna-RFMO FAD Working Group (WG)*	May 8-10	La Jolla, CA
IATTC Bycatch WG*	May 11	La Jolla, CA
IATTC's Scientific Advisory Committee	May 13-17	La Jolla, CA
U.S. Scientific Advisory Subcommittee and U.S. General Advisory Committee	June 4-5	La Jolla, CA
Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program	TBD (likely July 8-9)	TBD (likely Spain)
94 <sup>th</sup> Annual IATTC Meeting	TBD (likely July 11-19)	TBD (likely Spain)
Joint IATTC-Northern Committee WG**	September 2-6	Portland, OR

#### ***Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC)-related Meetings<sup>2</sup>***

Scientific Committee	August 12-20 (tentative)	Pohnpei, FSM
Catch Documentation Scheme Technical Meeting**	September 2-6	Portland, OR
Northern Committee**	September 2-6	Portland, OR
Technical & Compliance Committee	Sep. 27 - Oct. 1	Pohnpei, FSM
U.S. Permanent Advisory Committee	TBD	Honolulu, HI
WCPFC Annual Meeting	December 5-11	Papua New Guinea

#### ***International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC)-related meetings<sup>3</sup>***

North Pacific Albacore Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Workshop	March 5-7	Yokohama, Japan
Pacific bluefin tuna MSE Workshop	May 20-21	La Jolla, CA
ISC Plenary	July 11-15	Chinese Taipei

\*These meetings will immediately precede the IATTC's Scientific Advisory Committee meeting.

\*\*These meetings may occur concurrently.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on future meetings, visit: <https://www.iattc.org/MeetingsENG.htm>

<sup>2</sup> For more information on future meetings, visit: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings>

<sup>3</sup> [http://isc.fra.go.jp/meetings/future\\_meetings.html](http://isc.fra.go.jp/meetings/future_meetings.html)