

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

Outcomes of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) Meeting

The 39th Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the AIDCP, and meetings of associated AIDCP Working Groups, took place from July 15-16, 2019, in Bilbao, Spain. David Hogan (U.S. Department of State) represented the United States as the Head of Delegation, supported by U.S. government staff from NMFS West Coast Region (WCR).

The Parties discussed using the AIDCP surplus budget to fund a new dolphin abundance survey in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). Mexico revised their initially-proposed dolphin abundance survey design, which had a roughly \$7 million budget, a large survey area, covered eight to nine dolphin stocks, and two research vessels, to an alternative survey design with a roughly \$2 million budget, a reduced survey area containing two dolphin stocks, and one research vessel. The United States raised concerns about this change in design and committed to providing technical comments in writing. Due to objections from another Party, there was no consensus to use the surplus for any phase of the survey, and the discussion was postponed until the October meeting.

Outcomes of the 94th Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Meeting

The IATTC convened its [94th regular meeting](#) in Bilbao, Spain, July 22 - 26, 2019. Drew Lawler (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries) represented the United States, as Head of Delegation and Alternate U.S. Commissioner to the IATTC, along with Ryan Wulff (NMFS WCR), and David Hogan. Other U.S. Commissioners in attendance were Dr. Bill Fox (World Wildlife Foundation), Mike Thompson (Newport Landing Sportfishing), and John Zuanich (JZ Trading). Other members of the delegation included industry and non-governmental organization stakeholders, as well as other U.S. government staff from NMFS, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Trade Representatives. The following proposals were unanimously adopted by the members of the IATTC and are now posted on the [IATTC website](#).

- 1) [Resolution C-19-01: Amendment to Resolution C-18-05 on Fish-Aggregating Devices \(FADs\)](#): Venezuela sponsored this proposal to reduce duplicative reporting requirements (i.e., data are collected by both vessel captains and observers) by requiring that this data be collected by captains *only* on vessels without observers. This Resolution will require a rulemaking to revise U.S. regulations at 50 CFR 300 to remove the reporting burden on purse seine vessel captains, because all U.S. purse seine vessels that fish on FADs carry observers.
- 2) [Resolution C-19-02: Amendment to Resolution C-15-01 on the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated \(IUU\) Fishing Vessel List](#): The European Union sponsored this proposal, which adopted procedures to consider vessels listed on IUU vessel lists in other regional fishery management organizations for inclusion on the IATTC's IUU vessel list. This Resolution will not require a rulemaking.
- 3) [Resolution C-19-03: Financing Fiscal Year 2020](#): This is an annual Resolution which adopts the budget, and will not require a rulemaking.

- 4) [Resolution C-19-04: Resolution to Mitigate Impacts on Sea Turtles](#): The United States sponsored this proposal to combine and revise two existing Resolutions with sea turtle bycatch mitigation provisions (C-11-03 and C-04-05) and add new measures to strengthen requirements to mitigate fishing interactions with sea turtles. This will not require a rulemaking, as United States fleets already comply with the requirements.
- 5) [Resolution C-19-05: Amendment to Resolution C-16-06 on Silky Sharks](#): This proposal was co-sponsored by Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama. This Resolution extends the existing Resolution on silky shark mitigation measures for an additional two years (i.e., 2020 and 2021). The amendments to the Resolution increase flexibility by allowing exceptions for silky sharks accidentally caught and frozen by purse seine vessels. In those instances, the amendments require reporting rather than mitigation measures. In addition, there are inspection requirements for longline vessels that retain silky sharks, with exceptions for members and cooperating non-members that prohibit retention on longline vessels. Because U.S. longline vessels do not retain silky sharks, NMFS is considering a prohibition on retention of silky sharks on longline vessels. This Resolution will require a rulemaking to include the flexibility for silky sharks accidentally caught on purse seine vessels.
- 6) [Resolution C-19-06: Conservation of Whale Sharks](#): Sponsored by Venezuela, this Resolution creates a standalone Resolution on whale sharks (i.e., a separate Resolution from previously adopted provisions in Resolution C-18-05 on FADs). These provisions prohibit purse seine operators from intentionally setting on whale sharks. Because these provisions were already adopted and implemented by NMFS, this Resolution will not require a rulemaking.
- 7) [Resolution C-19-07: Terms of Reference for Management Strategy Evaluation \(MSE\) Workshops](#): The United States sponsored this proposal to establish terms of reference for the series of workshops the IATTC is planning for MSEs for tropical tunas. The Resolution is procedural in nature and intended to help guide the MSE work, given experiences with other MSE workshops for Pacific bluefin tuna and North Pacific albacore tuna. This Resolution will not require a rulemaking.
- 8) [Resolution C-19-08: Amendment to Resolution C-11-08 on Scientific Observers for Longline Vessels](#):¹ Four IATTC members (Colombia, European Union, Ecuador, and Mexico) proposed amending Resolution C-11-08 to increase the level of monitoring (human or electronic) on longline vessels, along with other updates to Resolution C-11-08. Although an increase in observer coverage was not adopted, the adopted Resolution tasks the IATTC Scientific Staff with presenting a proposal to develop minimum standards for electronic monitoring to the Scientific Advisory Committee in 2020, as well as clarifies reporting requirements. This Resolution will not require a rulemaking.

The proposal sponsored by Japan to amend Resolution C-18-01 on Pacific bluefin tuna (PBF), was withdrawn by Japan. Members with an interest in PBF opted to continue the discussion on future management of PBF at a meeting of the Joint IATTC-Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) Northern Committee (NC) Working Group (Joint Working Group) to be held in September. Members also considered requesting an extraordinary meeting of the IATTC

¹ A hyperlink is not provided because, at the time of submission of this NMFS Report in the Advanced Briefing Book, this Resolution was missing from the IATTC website. Additionally, NMFS assumes this resolution will be titled C-19-08.

to address outcomes of the Joint Working Group, if necessary. An extraordinary meeting would likely coincide with the fall meeting of the AIDCP, often held in late October.

International Meetings in 2019

Below is a list of scheduled upcoming international meetings in 2019 related to Pacific HMS, in which U.S. government representatives will participate.

WCPFC-related Meetings²

PBF Catch Documentation

Scheme Technical Meeting	Sep. 2	Portland, OR
Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC*	Sep. 3-5	Portland, OR
Northern Committee*	Sep. 3-6	Portland, OR
WCPFC Technical & Compliance Committee	Sep. 27 - Oct. 1	Pohnpei, FSM
U.S. Permanent Advisory Committee to WCPFC	Oct. 10-11	Honolulu, HI
WCPFC Annual Meeting	December 5-11	Papua New Guinea

*Portions of these meetings may occur concurrently.

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