

## **INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION (IATTC) 92<sup>ND</sup> MEETING, JULY 24-28, 2017**

### **Tuna Conservation**

#### **Yellowfin & Bigeye Tuna**

#### **What are the issues?**

Effective management measures — consistent with advice from the IATTC Scientific Staff and Scientific Advisory Committee — are needed to (1) rebuild the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) yellowfin tuna stock and (2) ensure bigeye tuna fishing mortality is maintained at sustainable levels.

#### **Why are we concerned?**

Updated 2016 stock assessments indicate that yellowfin and bigeye have been experiencing fishing mortality levels below the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) level in recent years.

Yet the operative capacity of the purse seine fleet, as of April 2017, has increased by 6.7% over the previous three years. Continued capacity increases will most likely translate into overfishing unless IATTC adopts management measures to address them.

#### **What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?**

- (1) Adopt measures for all fleets to avoid increased fishing mortality, such as extending the length of the purse seine fishery closure as recommended by the IATTC Staff and/or extending the time/area closure known as "El Corralito," or restricting fishing effort, and evaluating the different scenarios for catch limits in terms of monitoring and enforcing.
- (2) Ensure that future tuna conservation measures include catch limits with specific monitoring and enforcement provisions (e.g., by vessel, by country, etc.).

### **Our Top Asks for IATTC in 2017**

- 1** Adopt effective and enforceable tuna conservation measures for all fleets to avoid an increase in fishing mortality.
- 2** Develop harvest strategies for all key tuna species
- 3** Strengthen monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures to support data collection — and increase the observer coverage requirement for longline vessels.
- 4** Strengthen FAD management through science-based measures.
- 5** Strengthen the IATTC compliance assessment process.

# Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)

## Monitoring & Management

### What are the issues?

More data needs to be collected on FAD type, usage, and catch per effort in the EPO to better understand fishing capacity changes and likely impacts on IATTC-managed stocks. That data should be used to develop science-based FAD management measures.

### Why are we concerned?

Worldwide, FAD sets account for nearly 40% of all tuna catches — and 50% of skipjack catches. It's time for a concerted global effort to better monitor and manage FAD usage in every ocean region. Shark mortality and other FAD-fishing ecosystem impacts in the EPO need to be reduced; using non-entangling FAD designs and moving towards biodegradable FADs are critical steps.

### What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?

ISSF is pleased that the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recommended that the ad hoc Working Group on FADs, in collaboration with the SAC and the Commission staff, develop a planning roadmap. The roadmap can guide future actions in support of key FAD research areas, contributing to the elaboration and implementation of the Commission's FAD management measures. Nevertheless, there are key actions the Commission should take at its upcoming meeting:

- (1) Ensure all members submit timely, complete FAD data for their fleets from each trip this year — in accordance with C-16-01.
- (2) Accelerate the process of agreeing to comprehensive FAD monitoring and management.
- (3) Explore using biomass data collected by echo-sounder buoys at FADs to (i) inform scientific research on FAD conservation measures and (ii) obtain abundance indices independent from the fishery.
- (4) Adopt and implement the non-entangling and biodegradable FAD and FAD data provision recommendations — especially to reduce both shark mortality and lost FADs' impacts in the EPO.
- (5) Adopt and implement the Second Meeting of the IATTC Ad hoc Working Group on FADS recommendations and the SAC recommendations on FADs.

## Harvest Strategies

### What are the issues?

Last year, IATTC adopted a more complete interim harvest control rule (HCR) for yellowfin, skipjack and bigeye tuna in accordance with two years of scientific advice. This action paves the way for IATTC to implement a comprehensive harvest strategy that fisheries can follow to ensure stocks are maintained at an optimal level.

### Why are we concerned?

Harvest Strategies — which include target and limit reference points together with harvest control rules — provide pre-agreed rules for managing fisheries resources and acting in response to stock status changes. It is important to ensure that these pre-

agreed rules are robust because these rules and strategies help to rebuild stocks or avoid overfishing. And they reduce the need for protracted negotiations and delays that can lead to further stock declines.

## **What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?**

Test the interim HCR for yellowfin, skipjack and bigeye for robustness based on the main uncertainties in the assessment, such as the stock-recruitment relationship.

## **Bycatch and Sharks**

Sharks, Mobulid Rays, Sea Turtles & Sea Birds

### **What are the issues?**

IATTC needs to improve measures and strengthen efforts to mitigate the bycatch of vulnerable species in both purse seine and longline fisheries. In addition, science-based conservation and management measures to limit fishing mortality on sharks must be adopted and implemented. Data collection and reporting is essential.

### **Why are we concerned?**

Again in 2016, the IATTC Scientific Staff and IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) made bycatch-mitigation recommendations for both purse seine and longline fisheries that were not adopted. Also in 2016, proposals from seven IATTC parties to require sharks to be landed with fins naturally attached, and to strengthen measures to conserve shark populations, were not adopted.

## **What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?**

- (1) Adopt measures to mitigate the incidental catch and maximize the release survival of sharks, mobulid rays, sea turtles and sea birds.
- (2) Improve monitoring in all tuna fisheries without adequate observer coverage, such as small and medium-size purse seiners and longline vessels. Adequate monitoring of all fisheries is required to ensure implementation.
- (3) Take immediate steps to enforce the existing shark-finning resolution, and strengthen it by requiring that all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached.
- (4) Approve the IATTC SAC recommendations on sharks, mobulid rays and sea turtles.
- (5) Fund the recommended research on mitigating shark bycatch, especially in longline tuna fisheries, and on the survival of sharks and mobulid rays captured by all gear types, with priority given to those gears with significant catches. Fund also the pilot fishery/biological data sampling program to improve data collection and stock assessments for sharks and mobulid rays.
- (6) Approve the IATTC SAC recommendation regarding longline crew training on handling captured sea turtles.
- (7) Amend Resolution C-11-02 on seabirds to reflect updated seabird mitigation techniques, as recommended by the IATTC SAC.

# Monitoring, Control and Surveillance

## Observer Coverage and Electronic Monitoring

### What are the issues?

Comprehensive observer coverage is a critical component of monitoring and management for sustainable tropical tuna fisheries. For large-scale purse seiners, IATTC implemented a 100% observer coverage requirement. Yet the requirement for longline fisheries is only 5%. If human onboard observers are not possible for certain fleets or vessel sizes, including longliners, then guidelines for using electronic monitoring should be adopted.

### Why are we concerned?

Available data on observer coverage in longline fisheries indicates some fleets are not even meeting the 5% mandatory minimum requirement. Observer data can be used for monitoring vessel compliance with management measures. The paucity of data on longline catches and interactions with non-target species prevents assessments — hindering scientific input on effective conservation measures.

### What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?

- (1) Adopt the IATTC Scientific Staff 2016 and 2017 recommendations to increase observer coverage on longline vessels over 20 m to 20% over a five-year period.
- (2) At the same time, identify and sanction vessel non-compliance through the Review Committee with the existing 5% longline observer coverage requirement.
- (3) Adopt the IATTC Scientific Staff and IATTC SAC recommendations for purse seine fisheries to: (i) Establish an experimental program for using electronic monitoring systems to improve data quality; (ii) Establish an observer program for purse-seine vessels of less than 363 t carrying capacity at a level of coverage sufficient for estimating catches and bycatches; and (iii) Examine the feasibility of using electronic monitoring systems aboard small purse-seine vessels.

## Transshipment

### What are the issues?

To better manage transshipment and combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities, deficiencies and loopholes in [Resolution C-12-07](#) must be addressed.

### Why are we concerned?

Transshipment at sea can pose a high IUU risk if monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures are insufficient.

### What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?

- (1) Amend Resolution C-12-07 to explicitly define large-scale tuna longline vessels as those 20m or greater LOA.
- (2) Amend Resolution [C-11-05](#) to define large-scale tuna longline vessels that must be listed as those >20m LOA.

### **What are the issues?**

MCS tools are an essential component of sustainable fisheries management. For example, satellite Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) strengthen vessel compliance on the water, combat IUU fishing, and improve fisheries management by reducing uncertainty.

### **Why are we concerned?**

IATTC's MSC tools, such as its vessel monitoring system (VMS) measure, must be strengthened and aligned with best-practice standards.

### **What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?**

Amend C-14-02 to ensure that VMS data can be available to the Secretariat and used for scientific or compliance purposes.

## **Compliance**

### Compliance Processes

### **What are the issues?**

IATTC has a transparent compliance process but it can be strengthened. Members must recognize that a strong compliance process improves fisheries management.

### **Why are we concerned?**

While observers are allowed to participate in the IATTC Review Committee, the IATTC's final Compliance Report is not transparent about members' individual compliance with their obligations to the Commission, and the IATTC does not have a scheme of responses to non-compliance.

### **What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?**

- (1) Require members to submit a compliance action plan for identified infractions.
- (2) Begin discussing how to respond to repeated, significant non-compliance.
- (3) Adopt amendments to C-11-07 to increase transparency by (i) making public members' responses to non-compliance and (ii) detailing in the Review Committee report specific areas where members and cooperating non-members are non-compliant — and making specific recommendations to address such non-compliance.

## Vessel Registries & Fleet Capacity

### What are the issues?

Although IATTC is the only tuna RFMO with a closed vessel registry, its current capacity is well in excess of resource productivity.

### Why are we concerned?

Operative purse seine capacity is estimated to have increased by 25,000 m3 since 2015 due to latent capacity being activated.

### What is ISSF asking IATTC to do?

- (1) Implement the 2014 Technical Experts Workshop on the Capacity of the Tuna-fishing Fleet in the EPO recommendations to strengthen the 2005 Plan for the Regional Management of Fishing Capacity and reduce the current capacity in excess of resource productivity.
- (2) Consider the 2014 ISSF workshop on the transfer of fishing capacity from developed to developing countries outcomes in any regional capacity management scheme.

## Did you know?

ISSF is leading research on biodegradable FADs in collaboration with fleets operating in the EPO, coastal nations, and other stakeholders.

ISSF develops resources for the vessel community, including skippers guidebooks on bycatch-mitigation techniques as well as reports on electronic monitoring and vessel monitoring systems.

ISSF offers guidelines for implementing non-entangling FADs.

Three ISSF conservation measures focus on shark bycatch mitigation.

## ISSF Global Priorities for Tuna RFMOs

Implementation of rigorous harvest strategies, including harvest control rules and reference points

Effective management of fleet capacity, including developing mechanisms that support developing coastal state engagement in the fishery

Science-based FAD management & non-entangling FAD designs

Increased member compliance with all adopted measures adopted, and greater transparency of processes reviewing member compliance with measures

Strengthened Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) measures and increased observer coverage, including through modern technologies such as electronic monitoring and e-reporting

Adoption of best-practice bycatch mitigation and shark conservation and management measures



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