

# COMISION INTERAMERICANA DEL ATUN TROPICAL INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

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## ***AD HOC* MEETING TO CONSIDER MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR BIGEYE AND YELLOWFIN TUNA**

**La Jolla, California (USA)  
5-6 February 2007**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

#### **AGENDA**

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of Chair
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Review of catches of yellowfin tuna in 2006
5. Conservation of tunas:
  - a. Future management options for bigeye
  - b. Future management options for yellowfin
6. Other business
7. Recommendations and resolutions
8. Adjournment

#### **APPENDICES**

1. List of attendees
2. Proposals by the United States and Mexico for scientific work by Commission staff

The IATTC *ad hoc* meeting to consider management options for bigeye and yellowfin tuna was held in La Jolla, California (USA) on 5-6 February 2007. The attendees are listed in Appendix 1.

#### **1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened on 5 February 2007 by Dr. Robin Allen, Director of the IATTC.

#### **2. Election of the Chair**

Mr. David Hogan of the United States was elected chair of the meeting.

#### **3. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted without modification. However, Dr. Allen noted that before beginning the discussion of management options, the meeting needed to discuss the recent objections to the participation in meetings of the Commission and/or certain of its working groups by two non-governmental organizations. The Commission's rules of procedure require that any such objections be discussed at an executive session of the Commission.

Japan had objected to the participation of the Sea Turtle Restoration Project (STRP), and Mexico had objected to the participation of the Earth Island Institute (EII).

Japan re-affirmed that its objection was based on the statements of the STRP following the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), which the STRP attended as an observer, and the fact that STRP has not corrected or clarified these statements and has not responded to the communication from the WCPFC Secretariat on this matter. Japan views those statements as erroneous, and therefore concludes that the STRP does not have a legitimate interest in the work of the Commission, as stipulated in the Commission's rules of procedure.

Mexico also re-affirmed its objection, based on its view that the activities of EII do not contribute to sustainable fisheries and therefore that EII does not have a legitimate interest in the work of the Commission, as stipulated in the Commission's rules of procedure.

The meeting expressed its understanding of the concerns expressed by these two governments, and also noted the possibility that the conditions contributing to the objections might change, which could in turn lead to a different situation in future regarding the participation of these two organizations in Commission meetings. It was agreed that Dr. Allen should send, on behalf of the Commission, letters to the organizations explaining the situation.

#### **4. Review of the catches of yellowfin tuna in 2006**

Dr. Allen reviewed the situation with respect to the yellowfin fishery during 2006, drawing the attention of the meeting to Document AH-04, which contains a report on the decline in the catch of yellowfin tuna that was sent to CPCs at the end of 2006. Dr. Allen concluded that there was likely not a single cause for the decline in catch, but rather a combination of several factors including catchability, low recruitment, and overfishing.

Venezuela asked that the table in Document AH-04 be extended to include discards.

#### **5. Conservation of tunas: future management options for bigeye and yellowfin**

Dr. Allen opened the discussion of this item by reviewing Document AH-05, which was an analysis of management measures for tunas in the eastern Pacific Ocean. The paper contained a summary of the management measures for yellowfin and bigeye tunas that the Commission has adopted since 1966, a summary of the results of the Workshop on Management Strategies held in October 2006, and a discussion of management options that the Commission could consider for the future.

This agenda item, which was the main focus of the meeting, generated wide-ranging and extensive discussion. All of the management options noted in Document AH-05 were discussed, but there was no consensus among the participants on the best management approach for the Commission to pursue at this time. The meeting did, however, recommend, as elaborated under agenda item 7, that some scientific work be undertaken by IATTC staff for consideration by the Parties at the annual meeting of the Commission in June 2007.

Also, Mexico and the United States presented written proposals for some additional scientific work by Commission staff (Appendix 2).

The meeting discussed and endorsed the research proposed at the 74<sup>th</sup> IATTC meeting to test the effectiveness of sorting grids to allow small fish to escape from purse-seine nets.

#### **6. Other business**

The European Union suggested that the Parties, during the Commission meetings in June, should report on the implementation of their VMS systems to comply with Resolution C-04-06, and this idea was endorsed by the meeting.

#### **7. Recommendations and resolutions**

The meeting recommended that Commission staff provide the following information and analysis for consideration by the Parties in June:

- 1) Work to refine critical areas for juvenile bigeye tuna and juvenile yellowfin tuna and consider the conservation value of closing these areas to purse-seine fishing for a period or year-round;
- 2) produce estimates of total allowable catch (TAC);
- 3) compile a list of the practical and administrative issues raised regarding potential use of national catch allocations or individual fishing quotas (IFQs) for vessels;
- 4) estimate the conservation measures that would be necessary if the Commission implemented the [Plan for regional management of fishing capacity](#)<sup>1</sup> and reduced the purse-seine fleet to the target capacity levels;
- 5) investigate the impact of fishing effort on adult stocks of yellowfin tuna during recent years;
- 6) summarize available information on the impacts of the use of FADs, describe areas where FADs should not be placed because of the probability of catching juvenile tunas, determine the increase in vulnerability of tunas since the introduction of the FAD fishery, and determine the number of FADs placed.

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned on 6 February.

## **Appendix 1.**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.iattc.org/PDFFiles2/IATTC-73-EPO-Capacity-Plan.pdf>

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**Appendix 2.**

**PROPOSAL A-1**  
**UNITED STATES**  
**CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR ANALYSIS**

*The goals of this proposal are to:*

- A. Control yellowfin total catch,*
- B. Reduce mortality of small yellowfin tuna and bigeye tuna.*

Proposal:

1. This proposal is applicable in 2008, 2009, and 2010 to all purse-seine vessels and large scale tuna longline vessels (LSTLVs) fishing for yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack tunas.
2. The area bounded by 90°W meridian, 120°W meridian, 6°N parallel and 10°S parallel shall be closed to all purse-seine fishing for tunas in the EPO for the duration of this proposal.
3. A total allowable catch (TAC) for yellowfin tuna in the IATTC Convention Area shall be established at the recommendation of the Director.
4. When 75% of the TAC of YFT catch is reached, the area(s) identified as small YFT tuna reserves shall be closed to all purse-seine fishing for tunas and YFT landings from outside the reserves will be limited to 15% of the total landings.
5. Current control techniques for longline fishing will be continued and the catch levels will be reviewed in light of current stock assessments.

## **PROPOSAL A-2**

### **MEXICO**

#### **MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR THE TUNA STOCKS IN THE EPO**

Taking into account the research and recommendations of the IATTC on the increase in the yield per recruit when the fishing mortality of juvenile tunas diminishes,

Considering that in the EPO the greatest catches of juveniles are made in unassociated schools or associated with floating objects,

Taking into account that if the average size of the catch is increased and the mortality of juveniles reduced it is possible to increase the MSY,

The following is proposed:

That the scientific staff of the IATTC define an area(s) for yellowfin and bigeye tuna where fishing on floating objects and unassociated schools would be limited.

That the sum of sets on unassociated schools and floating objects made by fleet in 2006 be calculated and that the scientific staff suggest a percentage of reduction of effort (sets) for 2007 with the aim of reducing the mortality of juveniles.

When the fleet of a country reaches its set limit (based on the suggested reduction), they will no longer be allowed to use those fishing modes in that regulated area. Outside it any mode of fishing may be used in accordance with the previously-established recommendations and regulations.

A similar scheme would be established for bigeye with an area that represents the same advantages of recuperation for this resource.

This is applicable to the fleet with observers

Implementing this by fleet-country, additionally prevents the race for tuna y interference with the existing measure of closures in summer or winter. Summing the unassociated and floating-object sets and not considering them separately allows each fleet to operate normally and arguments about definitions of set types are avoided.

It is also proposed that all vessels that fish on FADs mark (number) these devices and that they maintain a record of the number of FADs and beepers aboard at the beginning and end of the fishing trip, also that information be recorded on the position of the FAD at the time it is deployed in the water and if applicable when it is recovered. In every possible case FADs will be recovered.

Likewise it is proposed that the IATTC staff determine the incremental vulnerability that leaving FADs at sea implies and their impact on the yield per recruit, and if applicable recommend appropriate measures.