

22 November 2005

Media release from the Secretariat of the Agreement for the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP)

At its Conference in Rome on 19 November, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) awarded the Margarita Lizárraga medal to the Agreement for the International Dolphin Agreement (AIDCP). The medal is awarded to a person or organization which has served with distinction in the application of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. According to Jacques Diouf, the Director-General of the FAO, the AIDCP was selected for the award “in recognition of its comprehensive, sustainable and catalytic initiatives in support of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, in particular those aspects relating to the precautionary approach and to the utilization of fishing gear and techniques which minimize the catch of non-target species.”

The head of the Secretariat for the AIDCP, Robin Allen, received the award on behalf of the AIDCP. “The award reflects the international recognition of the outstanding work of the AIDCP in conserving the resources of the eastern Pacific tuna fisheries, and in particular its groundbreaking measures to protect dolphins,” he said. “The programs of the AIDCP include strict measures to reduce dolphin mortalities, including the placement of observers on all large purse-seine vessels to provide objective scientific information on the fishery and on the compliance of vessels with its conservation measures. Under the AIDCP, the mortality of dolphins in the eastern Pacific has been reduced to levels approaching zero, and the majority of the tuna produced from that area is eligible for the AIDCP Dolphin-Safe Tuna label.”

In the eastern Pacific Ocean, large yellowfin tuna are often found associated with herds of dolphins, and fishers take advantage of this association to catch the tuna. This fishery has the advantages of both taking only mature yellowfin, and also minimizing bycatches of other fish and sea turtles. The AIDCP sets limits for allowable mortality of dolphins for the purse-seine fishery. Vessel mortality limits and required fishing practices are monitored by observers who accompany all purse-seine fishing vessels that might set their nets around tuna schools that are associated with dolphins.

More information is available on the IATTC web site, www.iattc.org, and the FAO web site, www.fao.org/fi/agreem/codecond/lizarraga/award.asp.

Contact:

Dr. Robin Allen
Director
Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission
8604 La Jolla Shores Drive
La Jolla, California 92037-1508, USA
Tel: +1 858 382 6649 or +1 858 546 7100
Fax: +1 858 546 7133
rallen@iattc.org

Attachments:

- a. Director-General’s remarks
- b. Acceptance speech by Dr. Robin Allen
- c. Executive Report on the functioning of the AIDCP in 2004

DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S REMARKS
PRESENTATION OF THE MARGARITA LIZÁRRAGA MEDAL
33RD SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At its Twenty-Ninth Session in November 1997, the FAO Conference instituted the Margarita Lizárraga Medal to be awarded every two years, upon the proposal of the Council, to a person or organization that has served with distinction in the application of the Code of Conducts for Responsible Fisheries. The Medal pays tribute to Dr. Margarita Lizárraga, Senior Fishery Liaison Officer, for her decisive role in promoting the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and her productive work in the field of fisheries for almost forty years, especially in developing countries.

It is my pleasure to announce that the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) was selected as the recipient of the Award for the biennium 2004-2005. The AIDCP is an international agreement whose objective is to reduce dolphin mortality in the tuna purse-seine fishery in the eastern Pacific Ocean, and to ensure the sustainability of tuna stocks and associated species in the ecosystem. The AIDCP has been an unqualified success and has diligently applied the relevant principles set forth in the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, in particular those aspects relating to the precautionary approach and the utilization of fishing gear and techniques which minimize the catch of non-target species and allowed for the enormous reduction in dolphin mortality that was achieved. AIDCP was also commended for its active involvement with the fishing industry and environmental non-governmental organizations, which constituted a successful and exemplary interaction among the various stakeholders.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I now call on the Representatives of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, Dr Robin Allen, Dr Guillermo Compeán and Dr Carlos Giménez, and the Representatives of the Government of Mexico to receive the Award.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY DR. ROBIN ALLEN

Director, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)
Secretariat to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program

On behalf of the Parties to the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program, I am pleased and honored to receive the Margarita Lizárraga medal recognizing the contribution of the Agreement to responsible fishing. The Agreement was inspired by the wish of the Parties to implement the principles and standards of the Code of Conduct of Responsible Fisheries, adopted by the FAO Conference in 1995.

The operation of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program involves close cooperation between governments, the owners, captains and crews of purse-seine fishing vessels, and non governmental environmental organizations. This cooperation includes a high level of information and experience sharing, and the Award is recognition of the contribution of all of these stakeholders who are working together to conserve and protect dolphins and to promote responsible fishing by purse-seine vessels in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

While the Agreement primarily is concerned with the impact of the fishery on dolphin stocks, it also has more general environmental and conservation objectives which are to be achieved within the framework of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission.

I know that all involved in the work of the AIDCP are very proud of the ground-breaking achievements of the Agreement, particularly in dramatically reducing the incidental mortality of dolphins in the tuna fishery, and in forging new and effective working relationships among fishermen, governments, and environmental non-governmental organizations. The recognition of the Agreement's achievements and its contribution to responsible fishing by the FAO is a very important affirmation of its value, and I believe this award will encourage all concerned to continue to work hard to fulfill the goals of the AIDCP and to strengthen the Agreement.

On behalf of all those, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

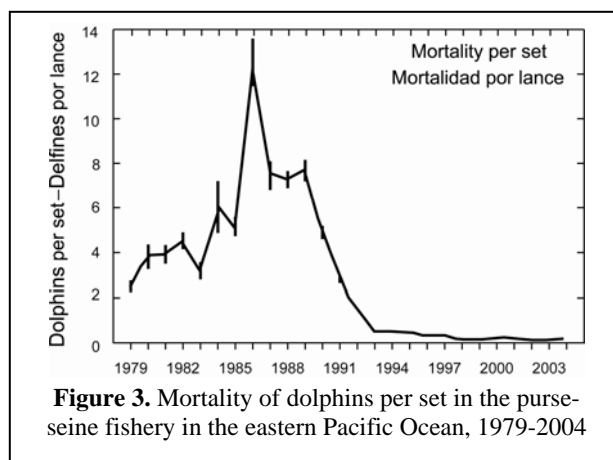
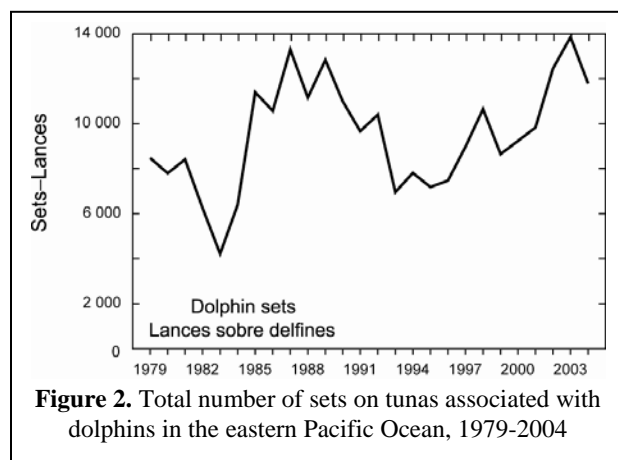
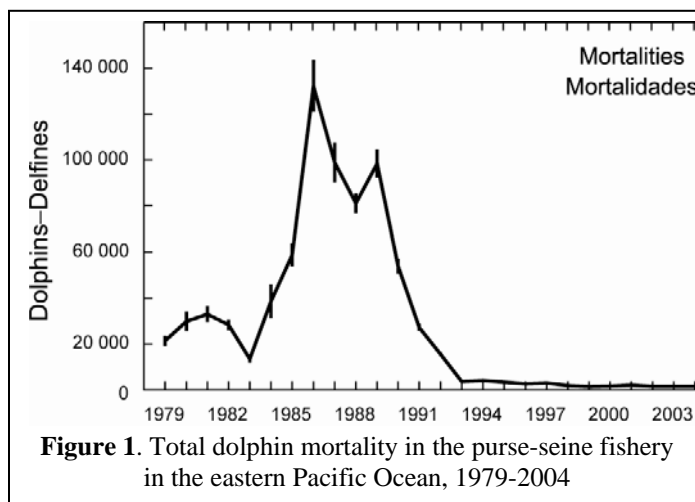
AGREEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DOLPHIN CONSERVATION PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE REPORT ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE AIDCP IN 2004

This Executive Report provides a brief summary of the operation of the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) during 2004. Further information can be found in minutes of meetings, reports and other documents at www.iattc.org. All data for 2004 are preliminary.

1. THE FISHERY IN 2004

During 2004, the trend of low incidental dolphin mortalities in the tuna purse-seine fishery in the Agreement Area to levels approaching zero, one of the principal objectives of the AIDCP, continued. In 11,783 intentional sets on tunas associated with dolphins, in which approximately 183 thousand metric tons (t) of yellowfin tuna were caught, 1,461 dolphins died, an average of 0.12 dolphins per set. (An additional 8 dolphin mortalities occurred in accidental sets.) Approximately 94% of these sets caused no mortality or serious injury of dolphins. Figures 1-3¹ show the trends in total mortality, number of sets on tunas associated with dolphins and mortality per set.



Ninety-one vessels were allocated full-year Dolphin Mortality Limits (DMLs) and the average individual-vessel DML (ADML) was 54 animals. Eighty-three of these DMLs were utilized; one was exceeded, and the average mortality per vessel was 16.3 dolphins. In addition, three vessels were allocated DMLs from the Reserve DML Allocation, two of which were utilized, and three vessels were allocated second-semester DMLs of 18, two of which were utilized. The distribution of the mortality caused in 2004 by these vessels is shown in Figure 4.

¹ In Figures 1 and 3, the vertical bars indicate the 95% confidence intervals in years when only a sample of the fleet carried observers.

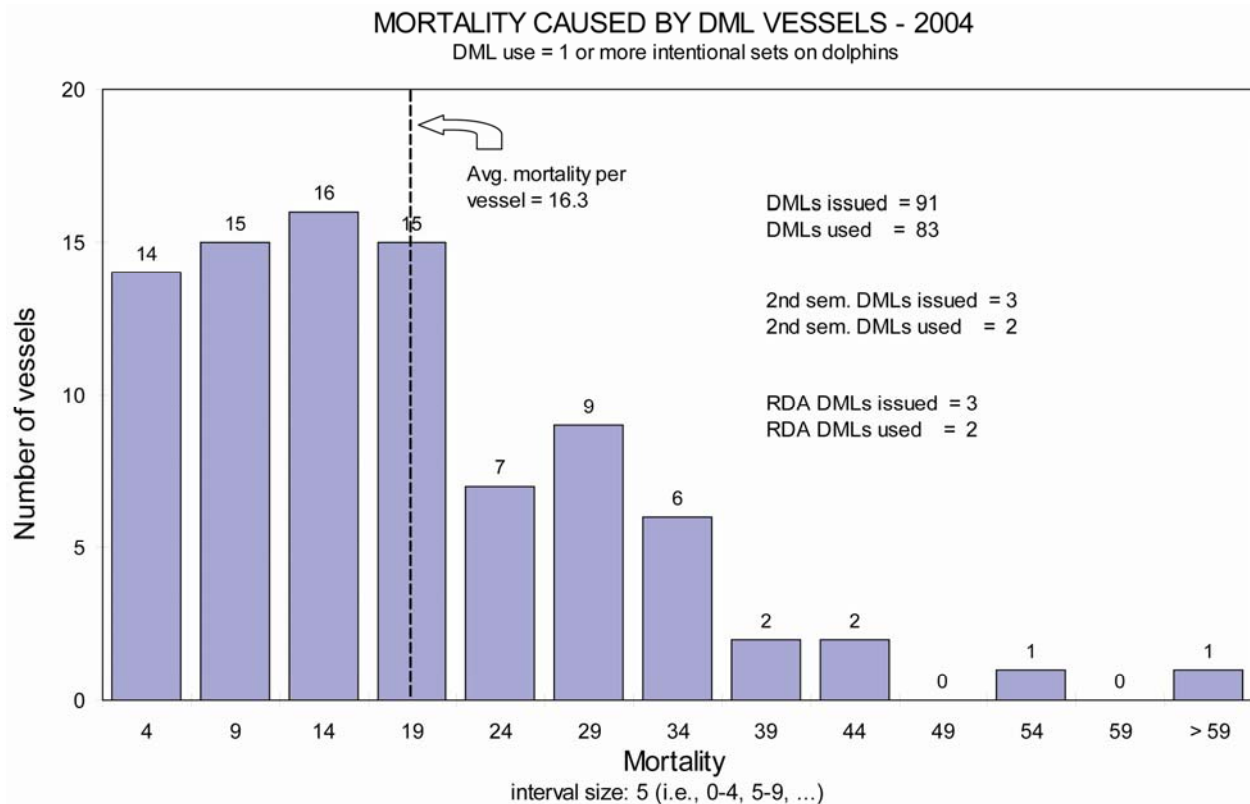


Figure 4. Distribution of dolphin mortality caused by vessels with DMLs, 2004.

2. STRENGTHENING OF THE AIDCP

The AIDCP uses a combination of mortality limits, operational requirements, and incentives to lower incidental dolphin mortality. Much of the operative detail of the Agreement is contained in its annexes and other measures that are evolving to strengthen the Agreement. During 2004, the following [changes](#) were made to the Annexes of the [Agreement](#) or adopted as [other measures](#) to strengthen the Agreement.

- The [AIDCP Dolphin Safe Tuna Certification System](#) was amended to include procedures for tracking and notifying Parties of invalid dolphin safe certificates. The Secretariat will maintain a record of such certificates and provide this information to the Parties on a regular basis.
- The [Procedures for Maintaining the AIDCP List of Qualified Captains](#) were modified to include the following:
 1. For a new captain to be added to the List he must not have any pending infractions, as detailed in section 4.1 of the *Procedures*, regarding which the relevant Party has not taken action.
 2. For a disqualified captain to be reinstated to the List he must not have any pending infractions, as detailed in section 4.1 of the *Procedures*, regarding which the relevant Party has not taken action.
 3. Any fishing captain on a vessel operating under the AIDCP who has committed two or more night set infractions shall be required to attend an instructional seminar prior to his next trip as a fishing captain
- Each Party shall ensure that each of its vessels that has been assigned a DML is inspected twice a year, to ensure that the dolphin safety gear and equipment requirements in Section 2 of Annex VIII of the AIDCP have been met. The first such inspection shall be carried out before the vessel's request for a DML is submitted, and the second before the notification of any reallocation of DMLs for vessels with full-year DMLs, and during the last quarter of the year for vessels with second-semester DMLs.

- Annex VIII of the AIDCP was amended to require vessels with a DML to have on board an operable long-range, high-intensity floodlight with a sodium lamp of at least 1000 watts or a multivapour lamp of at least 1,500 watts.
- The Parties agreed to criteria for attaining the status of cooperating non-party or fishing entity in AIDCP.
- The Parties agreed to criteria for establishing a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the AIDCP Agreement Area..

3. ADMINISTRATION OF OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE AGREEMENT

The 35th, 36th, and 37th meetings of the International Review Panel (IRP) reviewed observer information from 800 fishing trips, in which 12,735 sets were made on tuna associated with dolphins.

Following these meetings, a total of 115 possible infractions of the types shown in the table below were forwarded to the Parties for investigation, compared to 200 possible infractions in 2003 and to an average of 462 in the three previous years, 2000-2002.

POSSIBLE INFRACTIONS	2004	2003	Average 2000-2002
Fishing without an observer	0	4	2
Fishing on dolphins without a DML	6	5	7
Failing to avoid injuring or killing dolphins captured in the course of fishing operations	1	4	1
Fishing on dolphins after reaching the DML	24	0	38
Depart to fish with a DML without a dolphin safety panel in the net	2	7	9
Fishing captain assigned to a DML vessel not on AIDCP List of Qualified Captains	14	40	44
Use of explosives when fishing on dolphins	13	1	152
Not conducting backdown after dolphins are captured	0	5	5
Sacking up or brailing live dolphins	0	4	3
Harassing an observer, or interfering with his duties	4	7	8
Night set (not completing backdown within 30 minutes after sundown)	24	39	67
Not deploying rescuers during backdown	0	0	3
Item of rescue equipment missing	27	77	123
Not continuing rescue efforts after backdown with live dolphins in the net	0	1	0
Fishing on dolphins prior to notification of allocation of DMLs	0	6	N/A

As of May 6, 2005, the Secretariat had received the following responses from governments for possible infractions reported during 2004 and 2003:

Response	2004	2003
Confirmed as infraction, sanction imposed	9	78
Confirmed as infraction, no sanction	0	1
Warning issued	0	1
Determined not to be infraction	17	18
Under investigation	52	74
No response	37	28

4. DOLPHIN SAFE CERTIFICATION

In 2001 the Parties to the AIDCP established the [AIDCP Dolphin Safe Certification System](#), which provides assurance of the dolphin safe status of tuna by means of a certificate issued by a government for tuna that meets all the requirements of the [System for Tracking and Verifying Tuna](#).

During 2004, 25 valid dolphin safe tuna certificates were issued by the Parties.