

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

87TH MEETING (RESUMED)

La Jolla, California (USA)
27 October-01 November 2014

RESOLUTION C-14-06

MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN, 2015-2016

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in La Jolla, California (USA), on the occasion of its 87th Meeting:

Taking into account that the stock of Pacific bluefin tuna is caught in both the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) and the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Expressing concern that the latest stock assessment of 2012 and its 2014 update by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC), shows the following:

- The current (2012) biomass level of Pacific bluefin tuna is near historically low levels and experiencing high exploitation rates above all biological reference points;
- If the low recruitment of recent years continues, the risk of the spawning stock biomass (SSB) falling below its historically lowest level observed would increase; and
- Further substantial reductions in fishing mortality and catch over the whole range of ages should be considered in both Commissions to reduce the risk of the SSB falling below its historically lowest level.

Affirming that it is necessary to adopt compatible management measures to reduce the fishing mortality of Pacific bluefin tuna throughout the range of the resource to contribute to the rebuilding of the stock;

Recognizing that the impact of the fishery for Pacific bluefin tuna in the WCPO is much greater (84%) than in the EPO fisheries (16%) and its rate of increase in recent years has been greater (Document IATTC 83-05, page 75);

Putting on record again that the conservation measures adopted in the WCPO are more necessary to improve the status of the stock, due to the high magnitude and composition of their catch, since 80% of the fishing mortality in numbers of fish are individuals under the age of one year and are caught in the WCPO, which relates also to the magnitude of the impact;

Encouraging both Commissions to take complementary and effective measures to reduce the fishing mortality of Pacific bluefin tuna throughout the entire spectrum of ages;

Urging all IATTC Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) involved in this fishery to participate, in a fair and equitable manner, and without exceptions, in the discussion and adoption of conservation measures applicable to the stock throughout its entire range;

Aware that any measure adopted in the EPO will have less benefit than expected for the stock unless the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) adopts strong measures;

Mindful that these measures are intended as an interim means for exercising caution towards assuring sustainability of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource and urging comparable action by the WCPFC, and that future conservation measures should be based not only on these interim measures, but also on the development of future scientific information and advice of the ISC and the IATTC scientific staff;

Taking into account the IATTC scientific staff's conservation recommendation that a reduction of 20% to 45% in catches would be beneficial for the stock, provided that these reductions are implemented over the entire range of the stock;

Noting that, in the EPO, the average annual commercial catch during 2010-2012 was 5,769 metric tons, and the average annual sport catch during that time was 411 metric tons;

Also noting that the IATTC has adopted mandatory conservation and management measures for bluefin tuna for 2012-2014, and that the measures resulted in reducing catches in the EPO;

Desirous that combined conservation and management measures by the WCPFC and the IATTC, together with other voluntary measures aimed at reducing fishing mortality, should be implemented to better contribute to the condition of the Pacific bluefin tuna population; and

Concerned that measures adopted in the EPO alone will not fulfill their objective if effective and substantial measures are not taken for all fisheries involved by both Commissions;

Resolves as follows:

1. During 2015 and 2016, in the IATTC Convention Area, total commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by all CPCs shall not exceed 6,600 metric tons, for an effective annual catch of 3,300 metric tons in each year. No CPC shall exceed 3,500 metric tons in 2015. . In the event that the total actual catch in 2015 is either above or below 3,300 metric tons, the catch limit for 2016 shall be adjusted accordingly to ensure that the total catch for both years does not exceed 6,600 metric tons.
2. Included within the catch referenced in paragraph 1 is the provision for any CPC other than Mexico with historical commercial catches of Pacific bluefin in the Convention Area to catch up to 600 metric tons of Pacific bluefin in 2015 and 2016 combined, provided that (1) the catch of any such CPC in either year shall not exceed 425 metric tons and (2) in the event that the catch of any such CPC in 2015 exceeds 300 metric tons, the catch of that CPC in the IATTC Convention Area in 2016 shall not exceed 200 metric tons. The catch limit for each CPC other than Mexico under this paragraph for 2016 will be subtracted and reserved from the total catch limit remaining in paragraph 1 for the exclusive use of that CPC in 2016.
3. CPCs should endeavor to manage catches by vessels under their respective national jurisdictions in such a manner and through such mechanisms as might be applied, with the objective of reducing the proportion of fish of less than 30 kg in the catch toward 50% of total catch, taking into consideration the scientific advice of the ISC and the IATTC staff. At the annual meeting of the IATTC in 2016, the scientific staff shall present the actual results of the 2015 fishing season in this regard for the Commission's review.
4. This reduction applies to Pacific bluefin tuna of all sizes, not only to fish of less than 30 kg.
5. In 2015, each CPC must take meaningful measures to reduce catches of Pacific bluefin tuna by sportfishing vessels operating under its jurisdiction to levels comparable to the levels of reduction applied under this resolution to the EPO commercial fisheries until such time that the stock is rebuilt. Each CPC will report to the Commission prior to the 2015 annual meeting the specific measures taken or that will be taken to ensure such sportfishing levels have been or will be achieved. The Director shall share such reports with all interested CPCs. Beginning in 2015, each CPC will report sportfishery catches of Pacific bluefin tuna semi-annually to the Director.

6. CPCs shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the total catch of Pacific bluefin tuna in the Convention Area in 2015 and 2016 does not exceed the catch limit. For this purpose, each CPC shall report its catches to the Director in a timely fashion, weekly. The Director will send a first notice to the CPCs when 50% of the limit quota is reached. He will likewise send similar notices when 60%, 70%, and 80% of the limit quota is reached. When 90% is reached, the Director will send the corresponding notice to all CPCs, with a projection of when the limit quota established in paragraph 1 will be reached, and the CPCs will take the necessary internal measures to avoid exceeding the limit.
7. CPCs shall cooperate to establish an IATTC Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) to be applied to Pacific bluefin tuna as a matter of priority.
8. The Commission shall again request the WCPFC to adopt comparable and effective stock rebuilding targets, mandatory measures, and a definitive schedule for implementation of said measures in its 2014 Regular Annual Session to address the impact of the fisheries and reduction of fishing mortality in the Western and Central Pacific on the Pacific bluefin tuna stock.
9. Based upon actions and measures adopted by the WCPFC, as referenced in paragraph 8, and appropriate analysis thereafter by the ISC, the scientific staff of the IATTC shall assess the status of the Pacific bluefin tuna stock and the effectiveness of the measures adopted by WCPFC and IATTC. This assessment shall be presented at the annual meeting of the IATTC in 2016 for consideration of new measures for 2017 and thereafter.
10. To enhance the effectiveness of this resolution and Pacific-wide progress towards rebuilding the Pacific bluefin tuna stock, CPCs are encouraged to communicate with and, if appropriate, work with the concerned WCPFC members bilaterally.