

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

90TH MEETING (RESUMED)

La Jolla, California (USA)

12-14 October 2016

RESOLUTION C-16-08

**MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC OCEAN**

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in La Jolla, California (USA), on the occasion of its 90th 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);

Recognizing with concern that the latest stock assessment of 2016 by the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) shows the following:

- Although the spawning stock biomass (SSB) appears to have grown slightly in the last few years, SSB remains near the historic low point (ratio of SSB in 2014 relative to the theoretical unfished SSB($SSB_{2014}/SSB_{F=0}$, the depletion ratio) estimated in this assessment is 2.6%) and is experiencing exploitation rates above all biological reference points except for F_{MED} and F_{loss} ;
- The projection results indicate that the probability of SSB recovering to 41,000 mt (approximately $SSB_{med,1952-2014}$ as calculated in the 2016 ISC stock assessment) is 61.5% if low recruitment scenario is assumed and the catch and effort limits in Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) CMM 2015-04 and IATTC Resolution C-14-06 continue in force and are fully implemented;
- The 2014 estimated recruitment was relatively low, and the average recruitment for the last five years may have been below the historical average;
- 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 levels; and,
- The weight threshold in the WCPFC CMM needs to be increased to 85kg (weight of age 5) if the intent is to reduce catches on all juveniles according to maturity ogive in the assessment.

Taking into consideration that IATTC Members, through resolutions and voluntary actions, have since 2012 effected 40% reductions in the catch of bluefin tuna across the entire range of age classes available in the EPO with the objective of urging comparable conservation actions in the WCPO fishery, but, in the view of IATTC Members, without the actions sought by the IATTC having been taken by the WCPFC.

Noting that in 2016 the IATTC Scientific Staff recommended extending the measures established in the current resolution [Resolution C-14-06] for two more years and we encourage the WCPFC to adopt additional measures to reduce the catch of adults to in order to reduce the immediate risk of low spawner abundance on recruitment;

Recognizing the last recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC-7) derived from its last meeting in May 2016, in which there was consensus to support the recommendation of the 2016 IATTC Scientific Staff on Pacific bluefin tuna;

Recalling that Article VII, paragraph 1(c) of the Antigua Convention provides that the Commission shall “adopt measures that are based on the best scientific evidence available to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks covered by this Convention and to maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance which can produce the maximum sustainable yield...”;

Affirming that it is necessary to adopt compatible and effective management measures in both Commissions (IATTC and WCPFC), which have the responsibility and competence over this resource in order to reduce fishing mortality throughout the range of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource to contribute to the rebuilding of the stock;

Recalling the outcomes of the first Joint IATTC-WCPFC Northern Committee (NC) Working Group meeting held August 29 – September 2, 2016, in Fukuoka, Japan, including participants’ support for the continuation of the current IATTC Resolution C-14-06 for 2 years;

Putting on record again that greater than 84% of the fisheries impacts on the spawning stock biomass of Pacific bluefin tuna results from WCPO fisheries, and urging joint action with the WCPFC;

Noting a request by IATTC Members, consistent with IATTC-90-04d, *Recommendations by the Staff for Conservation Measures in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, 2016*, requiring greater reductions in juvenile catches in the western Pacific by WCPO fisheries and additional measures to reduce the catch of adults in order to reduce the immediate risk of low spawner abundance on recruitment;

Noting also that other IATTC Members did not support the above request, while still believing that further reduction of catch should be implemented by both Commissions;

Highlighting concerns that measures adopted in the EPO alone will not fulfill the objective of this resolution if effective and substantial measures are not taken for all fisheries involved by both Commissions;

Recognizing the need for a basin-wide rebuilding plan for Pacific bluefin and a precautionary long-term management framework for the stock and associated fisheries;

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;

Mindful that these measures are intended as an interim step towards assuring sustainability of the Pacific bluefin tuna resource, consistent with the precautionary approach, 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;

Noting that the IATTC has adopted mandatory conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna for 2012-2016, and that the measures resulted in reducing catches in the EPO;

Recalling that the Commission has adopted interim limit and target reference points for tropical tunas, but not for Pacific bluefin, and the IATTC Scientific Staff in 2014 recommended the adoption of BMSY and FMSY as interim target reference points for Pacific bluefin tuna (Document IATTC-87-03d);

Noting that the WCPFC has adopted an interim rebuilding target, and a workplan for establishment of a precautionary-approach based management framework, including: (1) recommend appropriate reference points; (2) agreeing in advance to actions that will be taken in the event each of the particular limit reference point is breached (decision rules); (3) recommend any changes to the rebuilding program and CMM;

Also noting that the initial rebuilding target adopted by WCPFC, the historical median of SSB of 42,592 t in ISC’s 2016 stock assessment, is equivalent to a depletion ratio around 6% as calculated in the 2016 ISC Stock Assessment, which is below the interim limit reference point adopted for other tunas in the EPO and

below the interim limit reference point for Pacific bluefin tuna recommended by the IATTC scientific staff;

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

Considering the recommendations made by the Seventh Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee, which recommended strengthening scientific cooperation with the WCPFC and promotion of the adoption of harmonized conservation measures for bluefin and bigeye tunas in both organizations;

Resolves as follows:

Part I. Long-term Management Framework

1. The Commission recognizes that the management objective of the IATTC is to maintain or restore fish stocks at levels capable of producing MSY, and shall implement a provisional rebuilding plan in part by adopting an initial (first) rebuilding target of $SSB_{med,1952-2014}$ (the median point estimate for 1952-2014) to be achieved by 2024 with at least 60% probability. The Commission shall do so by adopting catch limits and other necessary management measures that, based on information provided by the IATTC Scientific Staff, the SAC recommendations and the ISC, are expected to achieve the rebuilding target, while also recognizing the need for compatible and comparable measures and goals in both the IATTC and WCPFC. Implementation and progress of this plan shall be reviewed based, in part, on updates of stock assessments and SSB projections to be conducted by ISC in 2018 and IATTC scientific staff advice; management measures shall be modified, if necessary, based on the review.
2. In 2018 and taking into account the outcomes of the 2nd IATTC-WCPFC NC Joint Working Group Meeting expected to be held in 2017, the Commission shall adopt a second rebuilding target, to be achieved by 2030.
3. No later than the IATTC meeting in 2018, taking into account the outcomes of the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group, the Commission shall consider and develop reference points and harvest control rules for the long-term management of Pacific bluefin tuna, which should be comparable to those adopted by the WCPFC.
4. The decisions made in respect to Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of Part I shall be designed so as to conserve and recover the Pacific bluefin tuna stock, and be comparable or preferably the same to those made by the WCPFC. This cooperative process should be informed by the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group, which may include the results of harvest scenarios to be evaluated by the ISC, as agreed to at the first Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group meeting that convened on August 29-September 2, 2016.¹ Additionally, the effectiveness of the decisions made with respect to Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of Part I shall be evaluated by the ISC, IATTC Scientific Staff, and SAC when new stock assessment or management strategy evaluation results become available.
5. 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.
6. CPCs shall, wherever possible and to the extent practicable, work bilaterally and/or multilaterally

¹ See the Summary Report of the 12th Regular Session of the Northern Committee for a summary of the 1st Joint IATTC – WCPFC NC Working Group Meeting: <https://www.wcpfc.int/meetings/12th-regular-session-northern-committee>

towards ensuring the objectives and timelines in this resolution are successfully achieved.

7. CPCs shall continue to cooperate to develop a catch documentation scheme (CDS) for Pacific bluefin tuna that is, if possible, electronic. The decisions related to a CDS for Pacific bluefin tuna, specifically, should be informed, in part, by the Joint IATTC-WCPFC NC Working Group meetings.

Part II. Management Measures for 2017-2018

1. Each CPC shall report sport fishery catches of Pacific bluefin tuna semi-annually to the Director. CPCs shall continue their current management of sport fisheries taken in accordance with paragraph 5 of Resolution C-14-06.
2. During 2017 and 2018, 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 maximum annual catch rate of 3,300 metric tons per year by all CPCs combined. No CPC shall exceed 3,500 metric tons in 2017. In the event that the total actual catch in 2017 is either above or below 3,300 metric tons, the catch limit for 2018 shall be adjusted accordingly to ensure that the total catch for both years does not exceed 6,600 metric tons.
3. Any CPC other than Mexico with historical commercial catches of Pacific bluefin tuna in the Convention Area may catch 600 metric tons of Pacific bluefin in 2017 and 2018, combined, but not exceeding 425 tons in any year. Any catches under this paragraph count against the catch limit referenced in paragraph 2 of Part II (6,600mt).
4. 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 2018, the scientific staff shall present the actual results of the 2017 fishing season in this regard for the Commission's review. CPCs shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the catch limits specified in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part II are not exceeded in 2017 and 2018.
5. Each CPC shall report its catches to the Director in a timely fashion, weekly, after 50% of its catch limit is reached. The Director will send a first notice to the CPCs when 50% of the effective maximum annual catch rate of 3,300 mt 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 2 of Part II will be reached, and the CPCs will take the necessary internal measures to avoid exceeding the limit.
6. In 2018, the IATTC Scientific Staff shall present an assessment of the effectiveness of this resolution also taking into consideration the results of the ISC's latest Pacific bluefin tuna stock assessment, and conservation and management measures for Pacific bluefin tuna adopted by the WCPFC. The Commission shall consider new management measures for 2019 and, possibly, beyond based on the results of the assessment.