

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

104th MEETING

Lisbon, Portugal
31 August–4 September 2026

PROPOSAL IATTC-104 M-1

SUBMITTED BY ECUADOR

**PROPOSAL TO AMEND RESOLUTION C-19-08 ON OBSERVERS
ABOARD LONGLINE VESSELS**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

IATTC Resolution C-19-08 requires observer coverage of 5% of the fishing effort undertaken by each CPC's fleet of longline vessels greater than 20 meters length overall.

Taking into account that the staff recommendation for 2023 in document SAC-14-16, section 7.5, Longline observer program, states the following:

“(a) That countries with longline fleets update, in the IATTC Regional Vessel Register, the list of vessels over 20 meters operating in the EPO and report the number of trips made by the different vessels during the previous year, so that the percentage of observer coverage on longliners can be calculated and compliance with Resolution C-19-08 evaluated; (b) That CPCs submit all operational longline-observer data collected from 1 January 2013 to the present, consistent with the minimum data standards contained in Annex B of Resolution C-19-08, or provide a clear and complete explanation of why the missing datasets have not been submitted; (c) That the Commission revisit the issue of the percentage of observer coverage on longline vessels.”

Taking into account the recommendations of the Working Group on Bycatch at its ninth meeting in May 2019 to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), general recommendation 1: “Review Resolution C-11-08 (now C-19-08) in order to increase observer coverage on longline vessels greater than 20 meters length overall to 20%, and consider ways to complement observer requirements with electronic monitoring.”

Likewise, the recommendations of the 10th meeting of the SAC, document IATTC-94-02, section 3, Data, subsection 3.1.a, Electronic monitoring, recommend the following:

“The Committee recommends that the electronic monitoring (EM) initiatives implemented on purse-seine vessels, both classes 1–5 and class 6, which will improve data collection for the purse-seine fleet, also be tested in the longline fleet.”

Noting that large purse-seine vessels operating in the Convention Area are required to carry scientific observers aboard with 100% coverage, in accordance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program. Furthermore, in some CPCs, owners of purse-seine vessels below class 6 make a financial effort to provide information on their activities by carrying observers aboard in support of scientific research.

In this context, it is considered essential to amend the existing Resolution to provide for full observer coverage, whether human or electronic. This is an important action for measuring the longline tuna fishery's effort in fishing days.

RESOLUTION C-XX

AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION C-19-08 ON OBSERVERS ABOARD LONGLINE VESSELS

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in ~~Bilbao, Spain~~ Lisbon, Portugal, on the occasion of its ~~94th~~ 104th Meeting;

Recognizing the need to obtain better scientific information on target species, as well as complete data on interactions with non-target species, particularly sea turtles, sharks and seabirds;

Noting the considerations of Parties with extensive longline fisheries and the need to ensure and promote uniform and equitable treatment of all tuna vessels operating in the Antigua Convention Area;

Noting that all large purse-seine vessels operating in the Convention Area are required to carry scientific observers aboard with 100% coverage, in accordance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program;

Further distinguishing that, in some CPCs, owners of purse-seine vessels below class 6 make a financial effort to provide information on their activities by carrying observers aboard in support of scientific research; and

Taking into account that the IATTC scientific staff, in document SAC-17-10, determined that the current minimum coverage of 5% of the fishing effort of longline vessels greater than 20 meters length overall does not provide sufficiently representative data to accurately estimate catches of target species or bycatch species, particularly sharks and other vulnerable species caught less frequently; and taking into account the recommendation of the Working Group on Ecosystem and Bycatch, subsequently adopted by the Scientific Advisory Committee at its 17th meeting, to improve the coverage and quality of bycatch data in longline fisheries, it is necessary to progressively strengthen monitoring of this fleet through onboard scientific observers, electronic monitoring systems, or a combination of both, increasing minimum coverage to at least 20% of fishing effort, in order to obtain representative information on catches, species and size composition, condition and disposition of specimens, handling and release practices, and fishing-related mortality, thereby supporting stock assessments, ecological risk analyses, and conservation and management measures based on the best scientific information available.

Agrees that:

1. Each Member and Cooperating Non-Member (CPC) shall ensure that active longline vessels greater than 24 meters length overall carry human observers or electronic monitoring systems, according to the following schedule:

1 January 2027	10%
1 January 2028	20%
1 January 2029	50%
1 January 2030	100%

2. Fishing effort shall be determined by the number of fishing days or hooks set.

¹ As defined by the SAC in 2012 in SAC-03.

3. The primary task of the scientific observer and/or the remote electronic monitoring system (EMS) shall be to record, in accordance with the data standards established by the SAC, all available biological information, catches of target fish species, species composition, and any interaction with non-target species such as sea turtles, seabirds and sharks; and, where applicable, the accurate and timely application of mitigation measures agreed by the Commission.
4. When the results of the remote electronic monitoring program are reported, the margin of error inherent in the technical specifications of the system, which shall not exceed $\pm 5\%$, shall also be reported.
5. Using this information, the State/CPC authorities shall provide a vessel catch report including the following documents: (a) a technical report on the remote monitoring system used; and (b) general information on date, location (longitude and latitude), species, statistical information on size distribution, and average size and weight.
6. The video recordings referred to above shall also be available for IATTC analysis, and each CPC shall establish the measures necessary to prevent any substitution, editing or manipulation.
7. Each CPC shall update its vessel list, specifically identifying which vessels are active and, among them, the percentage covered by onboard observers and/or remote monitoring systems, as well as vessels that are inactive and/or sunk.
8. The Director, in cooperation with the scientific staff and the Scientific Advisory Committee, shall review the reporting format detailing the data required to be collected directly by scientific observers or through remote electronic monitoring and video-recording methods on longline vessels, and shall communicate it to the Commission.
9. Scientific observers shall submit a report on these observations to the authorities of their flag CPC no later than 30 days after the end of each fishing trip.
10. Each year, CPCs shall submit to the Scientific Advisory Committee, through the Director and by 31 March, scientific-observer information on the fishery during the previous year, in a format established by the Committee.
11. Provisionally adopt the definitions contained in Annex 1 of document EMS-01-01, prepared by the IATTC scientific staff for longline vessels.
12. Provisionally implement the Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) work plan detailed in document EMS-01-02 for longline vessels, as proposed by the IATTC Secretariat, and establish a working group for follow-up and any necessary amendments.
13. The IATTC scientific staff, in consultation with CPCs and other stakeholders, shall, within 90 days of adoption of this Resolution, prepare terms of reference for implementing workshops on electronic monitoring for longline vessels.
- ~~3. Each Member and Cooperating Non Member (CPC) shall ensure that at least 5% of the fishing effort undertaken by its longline fishing vessels greater than 20 meters length overall carries a scientific observer.~~
- ~~4. Each CPC shall endeavor to ensure that observer coverage is representative of the activities of its fleet, including in terms of fishing gear configuration, target species and fishing areas.~~
- ~~5. CPCs shall:
 - a. Ensure that the minimum level of coverage is met;
 - b. Take all necessary measures to ensure that observers can perform their duties competently and safely;~~

- ~~c. Endeavor to ensure that observers alternate vessels between assignments;~~
- ~~d. Ensure that the vessel to which an observer is assigned provides the observer with suitable food and accommodation during the assignment at the same level as the officers, where possible. Vessel captains shall ensure that observers receive all cooperation necessary to perform their duties safely, including access, as necessary, to retained catch and catch to be discarded.~~
- ~~6. The reporting requirements established by the SAC pursuant to C-11-08 are contained in Annex A. The SAC may decide to amend these reporting requirements or establish new ones when it considers this necessary and shall notify the Commission, as appropriate, for approval at the following annual meeting of the IATTC.~~
- ~~7. CPCs shall submit to the Director, no later than 30 June of each year, the operational data collected by observers during the previous year, consistent with the Minimum Data Reporting Standards (Annex B).~~
- ~~8. Unless otherwise specified by the SAC, CPCs shall submit other reports under this Resolution by 31 March of each year.~~
- ~~9. The IATTC scientific staff, in consultation with CPCs, shall prepare a draft proposal for the development of minimum standards for implementation of an EMS for longline fleets, taking into account the experience of CPCs implementing EMS on longline vessels and progress achieved in other tuna RFMOs, for presentation at the SAC meeting in 2020.~~

~~The SAC, in consultation with the IATTC scientific staff, shall submit recommendations on this proposal to the Commission for consideration at its annual meeting in 2020.~~