

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

93RD MEETING

San Diego, California (USA)
24, 27 – 30 August 2018

PROPOSAL IATTC-93 F-2

SUBMITTED BY COLOMBIA AND MEXICO

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION C-11-08 ON
OBSERVERS ON LONGLINE VESSELS

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The current resolution C-11-08 on observers on longline vessels makes it mandatory to have a coverage of 5% of the fishing effort made by its longline fishing vessels greater than 20 metres length overall.

Taking into account that the staff recommendation on management and data collection, 2018, the longline fishery, states the following:

“Resolution C-11-08 requires that at least 5% of the fishing effort by longline vessels greater than 20 m length overall (LOA) carry a scientific observer. However, 5% coverage is too low for calculating accurate estimates of the catches of species caught infrequently in those fisheries, such as some sharks of conservation concern; 20% coverage is considered the minimum level required for such estimates. Both the staff and the SAC have recommended that this level of coverage be adopted for longline vessels over 20 m LOA.

RECOMMENDATION: The staff maintains its recommendation of at least 20% observer coverage of longline vessels over 20 m length overall..”

In addition, the recommendations of the ninth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (CCA), held from May 14 to 18, 2018 in La Jolla, California, state the following:

“(..) the SAC recommends that CPCs with large scale longline fleets: 1) share the operational-level data with the IATTC through an appropriate way; and/or 2) collaborate with IATTC staff and other CPCs with large-scale longline fleets to develop improved abundance indices.”

In this context, it is considered essential that the current resolution be modified to accommodate a necessary coverage, in a gradual manner that will allow it to reach the proposed level of 20%, through two alternatives. One is the gradual increase in the number of observers on board or alternatively, the use of electronic methods of remote monitoring and the use of conventional video cameras.

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in San Diego, California (USA), on the occasion of its 93rd meeting:

Recognizing the need to improve the scientific information from the longline fishery on target species as well as comprehensive data on interactions with non-target species as required by the Antigua Convention, in particular, sea turtles, sharks and seabirds;

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

Noting that large purse-seine vessels operating in the Antigua Convention Area have been operating for many years and comply with carrying 100% scientific observers aboard, in accordance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program;

Taking into account and reaffirming the recommendation by the Ninth Meeting of the Commission's Scientific Advisory Committee that within a period of no more than five years, the coverage by observers on longline fishing vessels greater than 20 metres length overall be increased until the scientifically adequate coverage of 20% is reached,

Agrees that:

1. A gradual increase in observer coverage will be implemented in order to ensure a 20% coverage and for this:
2. Each Member and Cooperating non-Member (CPC) shall ensure a gradual increase in the coverage by scientific observers on longline fishing vessels greater than 20 meters length overall so that:
 - a. from 1 January 2020, coverage shall be at least 10%.
 - b. from 1 January 2022, coverage shall be at least 15%.
 - c. from 1 January 2024, coverage shall be at least 20%.
 - d. Or alternatively, starting in 2020, the coverage will be gradually incremented in the same percentages using electronic methods of remote monitoring and the additional use of conventional video cameras to carry out the controls provided in this Resolution and, through the electronic monitoring option, achieve that the country be enabled to control in a timely manner and from land the management of fishing on board of its vessels;
3. The main task of the on-board observers or the remote electronic monitoring systems shall be to record catches of target species, species composition by species, as well as any interactions with non-target species, such as sea turtles, seabirds and sharks and, where appropriate, the precise and timely application of mitigation measures agreed by the Commission
4. When the results of the remote electronic monitoring program are communicated, the margin of error inherent in the technical specifications of the system will also be reported, which will not exceed a range of +/- 5%
5. With this information the State / CPC authorities will provide a report of the vessel having made the catches, including the following documents: a) Technical report of the remote monitoring system used, b) General information on: date, place (length and latitude), species, statistical information on size distribution, average size and weight, size. The effort shall be determined by the number of fishing days, type of catch, discards, among others.
6. Each CPC shall ensure that the coverage by observers and/or remote electronic systems be representative of the activities of its fleet and shall report to the IATTC staff the duration of the fishing operations.
7. The aforementioned video recordings shall also be available for analysis by the IATTC and each CPC shall adopt the necessary measures to avoid any substitution, editing or manipulation.
8. Each CPC shall update the list of its vessels, indicating specifically which vessels are active, and of them the percentage of on-board observers and / or remote monitoring systems, in addition to the inactive, and/or sunk vessels.
9. The Director, in cooperation with the Scientific Staff and the Scientific Advisory Committee, shall review the reporting format detailing the required data to be collected directly by scientific observers or through remote electronic monitoring systems on longline vessels and will communicate it to the Commission.
10. Scientific observers shall submit to the authorities of their flag CPC a report on these observations at the latest 30 days after the end of each fishing trip.

11. Every year, CPCs shall submit to the Scientific Advisory Committee, through the Director, by 31 March, the scientific observers' information on the previous year's fishery, in a format established by the Scientific Advisory Committee.
12. The large scale longline fleets shall: 1) share the operational-level data with the IATTC through an appropriate way; and/or 2) collaborate with IATTC staff and other CPCs with large-scale longline fleets to develop improved abundance indices.
13. The use of remote electronic monitoring systems be evaluated in order to establish minimum standards and observer coverage in longline fisheries in the EPO be extended through these two options.