

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

104th MEETING

**Lisbon, Portugal
31 August – 4 September 2026**

RESOLUTION C-26-03

**INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PROVISIONAL
REFERENCE POINTS FOR SWORDFISH IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC OF
THE IATTC AREA**

The *Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC)*, gathered in Lisbon, Portugal, on the occasion of its 104th Meeting:

Taking into account that the objective of the Antigua Convention is to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fish stocks in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Recalling Article VII of the Antigua Convention, which directs the Commission to adopt conservation and management measures based on the best scientific evidence available;

Mindful of its responsibility to make recommendations to its Members and Cooperating non-Members (CPCs) for the long-term sustainable use of the stocks of tunas and tuna-like species;

Recognizing that swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) is a highly migratory species and a priority for the management of the Commission, and that the quality, coverage and availability of fishery information vary among CPCs;

Recognizing that a new fishing gear consisting of a trap line (sometimes referred to as ‘ring gear’) has begun to be deployed by vessels in the area managed by the IATTC;

Noting that Resolution C-19-08 establishes provisions on scientific observers for longline vessels, and that the Strategic Science Plan 2026–2030 identifies data collection, sustainable fisheries, knowledge transfer and capacity building among its core themes;

Taking into consideration that the Strategic Science Plan, under goal FISH 6, objective 4 (SAC-16-07), establishes that an assessment of South Pacific swordfish will be carried out between 2026 and 2030, the quality of which will depend on harmonized catch, effort, biological, observer and bycatch data;

Further recognizing that the observer programs of the Government of Ecuador, including private fishery improvement project initiatives, have strengthened information on catch, effort, CPUE, biological sampling and bycatch since 2022, and can contribute to regional assessment processes;

Considering that the absence of reference points limits the ability to determine stock status, adopt timely measures and develop harvest control rules;

Considering the obligation of the Commission, under Article VII.1(c) of the Convention, to adopt

measures to maintain or restore the populations of harvested species at levels of abundance that can produce the maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

Bearing in mind that, on the basis of the best scientific information available and of the precautionary approach, the IATTC has adopted, in Resolution C-23-06, harvest control rules for the tropical tunas (yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack) based on reference points underpinned by the maximum sustainable yield (MSY);

Convinced that strengthening data exchange and the precautionary adoption of provisional reference points are complementary measures to improve the assessment and management of swordfish in the EPO;

Agrees:

INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND HARMONIZATION

1. Implement, during the second half of 2027, a second regional technical workshop on South Pacific swordfish within the IATTC Area, funded by the private sector of Ecuador, the objectives of which shall be:
 - The timely, efficient and secure exchange of scientific and fishery information among the CPCs, with the support of the IATTC scientific staff, in accordance with the applicable confidentiality and data-use rules.
 - To review and analyze the scope and effects of the deployment of trap lines known as ‘ring gear’ on the fishery and on the stocks, including a description of their structure and of the rules governing their use by the vessels operating in the IATTC Area.
 - To identify, categorize and prioritize the problems and the solutions related to data collection, including data collected from trap lines.
2. Request that the CPCs strengthen and, where feasible, harmonize the collection and reporting of:
 - a. catch and effort;
 - b. vessel and gear characteristics;
 - c. at-sea observer data and landings monitoring;
 - d. bycatch and discards;
 - e. biological measurements; and
 - f. transshipments.
3. Instruct the IATTC scientific staff, in consultation with the Scientific Advisory Committee and the CPCs, to identify information gaps in order to propose minimum standards and validation mechanisms, and to report on progress before the benchmark assessment scheduled for 2028.

PROVISIONAL REFERENCE POINTS

4. Provisionally adopt, consistent with the interim reference point protocol and with the values recommended by the IATTC scientific staff in document SAC-14-INF-O, the following spawning-biomass-based proxy reference points for the South Pacific swordfish stock in the IATTC Area:
 - a) Target Reference Point: 30% of the spawning biomass that would exist in the absence of fishing activity (SSB₀).
 - b) Limit Reference Point: 20% of the spawning biomass that would exist in the absence of fishing activity (SSB₀).

5. Recognize that these reference points are interim, precautionary measures and do not prejudice the selection of definitive or optimal reference points.
6. Use the provisional reference points to support the interpretation of stock status and the future development of management options and harvest control rules through management strategy evaluation, taking into account scientific uncertainty.
7. Review these reference points after the benchmark assessment scheduled for 2028, or earlier if substantial new scientific information so warrants, taking into account the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee and of the IATTC scientific staff. MSY-based target and limit reference points shall also be evaluated and compared with the depletion-based reference points adopted in this Resolution.
8. Ensure that subsequent assessments are carried out at an appropriate frequency, preferably every three to five years, subject to available resources and to the priorities of the Strategic Science Plan.