



Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Annual Meeting, September 1–5, 2025

This Position Statement outlines issues that we urge the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) to act on at its upcoming meeting.



COMPLIANCE PROCESSES

2025 Asks

In implementing its revised compliance assessment process, the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures should:

- Develop and adopt a hierarchy of infractions and a set of responses to specific categories of non-compliances.
- Develop and adopt performance metrics for IATTC measures.

Background

A strong and transparent compliance process improves fisheries management by holding regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) members accountable. In 2024, the IATTC made significant progress in strengthening the procedures and outcomes of its Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures, including by adopting a time-bound work plan. Robust implementation of this work plan is now needed. ISSF and Pew Charitable Trusts have specific recommendations to improve RFMO compliance processes in workshop reports: [2020 report](#), [2021 report](#), [2022 report](#).

Priorities to Progress

- Specifically require Members to report in detail how they are implementing IATTC measures and obligations (i.e., the specific laws or regulations that are in place).

[RFMO Compliance Information & Resources](#)



TUNA STOCK CONSERVATION

2025 Asks

- Adopt, for 2026, one of the following management options, as recommended by the IATTC scientific staff:
 - A reduction of not more than 10 days in the closure of the tuna purse seine fishery; or
 - A reduction of not more than 7 days accompanied by the elimination of the closure area known as the 'corralito.'
- Maintain the Individual Vessel Limit and support the Integrated Port Sampling Program (IPSP) by integrating the Traditional Port Sampling (TPS) and the Enhanced Monitoring Program (EMP).

continued on next page

- Adopt a reporting requirement for the provision of detailed, set-by-set and vessel-specific catch and effort data for longline fisheries, both historical and current.

Background

The three tropical tuna stocks in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) are in a healthy state. The IATTC scientific staff noted that the existing closure for purse seine vessels under Resolution C-24-01 could be reduced without risk to the status of the stocks, provided that key elements, such as the Individual Vessel Threshold (IVT) and the Enhanced Monitoring Program (EMP), remain in place or are integrated into an Integrated Port Sampling Program (IPSP). The scientific staff advised that any significant reductions in management measures should be implemented incrementally and within the framework of an adopted harvest strategy, ensuring alignment with long-term conservation and management goals.

Detailed set-by-set and vessel-specific catch and effort data, both historical and current, from longline fisheries are needed to develop reliable indices of abundance and strengthen scientific advice.

Priorities to Progress

- Support the planning and implementation of a tropical tuna tagging project in the EPO to enable the next skipjack benchmark assessment in 2028–2029 and to improve stock assessments for yellowfin and bigeye tunas.



2025 Asks

In line with ISSF's established approach to strengthening FAD management:

- Adopt clear rules for FAD ownership and strengthen the monitoring of remote deactivation and reactivation events, as stipulated in Resolution C-24-01.
- Establish a monitoring program of stranded FADs and explore the development of a coordinated FAD retrieval network.
- Develop and implement standardized marking systems for both FAD structures and buoys, to improve FAD traceability.
- Establish a timeline to develop a FAD register that will integrate all FAD-related data monitoring.
- Collect historical FAD position and biomass data from echosounder buoys to produce indices of abundance independent from the fishery.

Background

Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), when lost and abandoned, contribute to marine debris and damage sensitive marine habitats. In response, the IATTC has adopted a phased transition to fully biodegradable FADs beginning in 2026. Voluntary FAD retrieval programs have also been initiated in the Galapagos Islands and Palmyra Atoll. However, these projects are still in their early stages. Thus, additional efforts are required to improve FAD management, including the adoption of science-based limits on FADs, clear rules for FAD ownership, and enhanced marking and tracking systems to monitor FAD movements and fate, all of which can be integrated into a FAD register to facilitate monitoring. Also, data from FAD echosounder buoys—particularly biomass estimates—can support the development of fishery-independent indices of tuna abundance and selective fishing.

Priorities to Progress

- Continue and strengthen research on acoustic data interpretation to accelerate its integration into scientific applications (i.e., selective fishing strategies, tuna behavior studies, and the development of abundance indices).
- Develop and implement science-based limits on FAD deployments and FAD sets.
- Develop FAD retrieval program performance indicators and a binding FAD-recovery policy.

FAD Management Information & Resources



ELECTRONIC MONITORING (EM) AND REPORTING & OBSERVER COVERAGE

2025 Asks

- Adopt measures to begin increasing observer coverage on large-scale longline vessels (human and/or electronic in accordance with the adopted [interim EM Standards](#)) to an interim level of 20% from the minimum 5% and adopt a timeline to progressively reach 100% coverage.
- Adopt measures to begin observer coverage (human and/or electronic in accordance with the adopted [interim EM Standards](#)) of at least an interim level of 20% for small-scale purse seine vessels (class 1-5) and adopt a timeline to reach 100% coverage.

Background

Comprehensive observer coverage is critical to effective fisheries management, compliance monitoring, and independent verification of catch, effort, species composition and bycatch. 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) is feasible and necessary. IATTC's minimum 5% observer coverage requirement for [longline vessels is not being fully met](#) and there are gaps in the reporting of [longline operational observer data](#). There is no requirement for observer coverage on class 1-5 purse seine vessels. Catch estimates of bycatch species are unlikely to be reliable at 5% coverage, a rate also insufficient for estimating the total catch of bigeye and yellowfin tuna. In 2024, IATTC adopted minimum EM standards and program requirements for both purse seine and longline fisheries. CPCs with longline fisheries and small-scale purse seine (class 1-5) fisheries should embrace this opportunity to improve monitoring.

Priorities to Progress

- Establish a comprehensive observer program (human or electronic or a combination) to cover longline vessels and small purse seine vessels.
- Require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) in industrial tuna fisheries, and all those vessels engaged in at sea transshipment.

Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Information & Resources



EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES (HARVEST STRATEGIES)

2025 Asks

- Finalize the management strategy evaluation (MSE) for tropical tunas and develop management objectives and revised reference points for all tropical tunas.
- Adopt elements (reference points, harvest control rule, etc.) of the Pacific Bluefin Harvest Strategy as recommended by the IATTC SAC.
- Adopt effective measures to control catches of South Pacific albacore tuna and cooperate with WCPFC on a stock wide management procedure, including through the establishment of a joint working group as soon as possible.

Background

The IATTC has made notable progress over the past year in developing management procedures for bigeye and other tropical tuna species. For example, it has adopted preliminary target reference points and acceptable levels of risk for skipjack, yellowfin, and bigeye tuna. This year, the IATTC staff presented a candidate harvest strategy for tropical tunas in response to Resolution 24-01; however, this harvest strategy has not yet been fully tested through a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE). In 2023, the IATTC adopted a harvest control rule for North Pacific albacore. Moreover, the Joint IATTC-WCPFC and Northern Committee Working Group has advanced the development of Pacific bluefin tuna harvest strategies and IATTC-WCPFC conducted a joint stock assessment for South Pacific albacore in 2024. The IATTC and the WCPFC should establish a joint working group to further collaborate on South Pacific Albacore management. The Commission must continue building on this progress by developing robust management procedures for tropical tunas and other targeted stocks.

Priorities to Progress

- Ensure continued support, and secure funding, for all target tunas MSE.
- Accelerate the adoption, and implementation of, comprehensive, precautionary management procedures for all tropical tuna stocks, and other targeted stocks.



BYCATCH MITIGATION & SHARK PROTECTIONS

2025 Asks

- Amend Resolution C-24-05 to require that all retained sharks be landed with fins naturally attached without exceptions and [include the best handling and release practices updated by the IATTC scientific staff in 2025](#).
- Adopt a revised seabird measure (C-11-02) to [reflect the current state of scientific knowledge](#) on seabird mitigation measures and align their specifications to meet the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) standards.
- Revise sea turtle Resolution C-19-04 to require longliners to simultaneously use circle hooks and finfish bait, as well as to implement the best safe-handling and release practices [updated by the IATTC scientific staff in 2025](#), consistent with the simulated efficacy of different conservation measures [assessed](#).

- Include the seven rays species identified by IATTC SAC in the list of species under the purview of IATTC according to paragraph f of Article VII of the Antigua Convention.

Background

Sharks, rays, sea turtle species and seabird species are declining in abundance or are threatened. Existing IATTC resolutions for these groups should be updated to reflect the current state of scientific knowledge for best-practice mitigation and safe-handling and release techniques, as recommended by the IATTC scientific staff and outlined in papers presented to the IATTC Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group and SAC.

Priorities to Progress

- CPCs continue investigating the effect of circle hook sizes in reducing bycatch while optimizing target species catch rates to recommend a minimum hook size under Resolution C-19-04.
- Continue collecting shark catch data from both small-scale and industrial fisheries and organize data exchange workshop to enhance shark stock assessments.
- Continue investigating promising and new bycatch release tools to improve safe-handling and release best practices.

Bycatch Reduction Information & Resources



TRANSSHIPMENT REGULATION

2025 Asks

- Adopt amendments to Resolution [C-22-03](#) to strengthen the regulation and monitoring of at-sea transshipment, including:
 - prohibiting vessels from acting as both a fishing and receiving vessel on the same trip;
 - requiring all vessels authorized to conduct at-sea transshipment to have an operational automatic identification systems (AIS), and that VMS position data are provided to IATTC Secretariat in near-real time; and
 - requiring advance notice of 48 hours for planned transshipment events.

Background

Transshipment at sea presents risks for Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and other illicit activities if not well-managed and transparent. To better manage transshipment, ensure complete data collection and timely reporting, and to combat IUU fishing activities, deficiencies in Resolution [C-22-03](#) must be addressed to meet [best practices](#).

Priorities to Progress

- Ensure all carrier vessels are meeting the required 100% observer coverage under [Resolution C-22-03](#).
- Require 100% observer coverage (human and/or electronic) on all fishing vessels engaged in at sea transshipment.



VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS & PORT STATE MEASURES

Background

IATTC's VMS program ([C-23-11](#)) is not centralized and does not meet [best practice standards](#) for position reporting, polling frequency and vessel coverage, among others. Also, IATTC's Resolution for an IATTC Scheme for Minimum Standards for Inspection in Port ([C-21-07](#)) does not meet a best practice standards as it [is not fully aligned with FAO Agreement on Port State Measures](#) (PSMA).

Priorities to Progress

In order to ensure compliance with tuna conservation measures and combat IUU fishing:

- Adopt amendments to Resolution [C-23-11](#) to strengthen the IATTC VMS, including by establishing a centralized or partly centralized program and requiring simultaneous near-real time position reporting to the IATTC Secretariat and the flag State.
- Adopt amendments to Resolution [C-21-07](#) to align it with the FAO PSMA, including by adding minimum standards for port inspector training and for inspection reports, establishing provisions on the denial of use of ports, and requiring reporting on all port inspections.



CAPACITY

Background

Although IATTC is the only tuna RFMO with a closed vessel registry, its current capacity is well in excess of resource productivity. Operative purse seine capacity has continued to [increase](#) since 2015 due to latent capacity being activated.

Priorities to Progress

- Implement the [2014 Technical Experts Workshop on the Capacity of the Tuna-fishing Fleet in the EPO](#) recommendations to strengthen the 2005 Plan for the Regional Management of Fishing Capacity and reduce the current capacity.