

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON ELECTRONIC MONITORING (EM)
3RD MEETING
Panama City, Panama
25 August 2025

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The 3rd Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Electronic Monitoring (EM) was held on 25 August 2025 in Panama City, Panama. The list of participants is included as Annex 1.

1. Opening of the Meeting

The Co-chairs provided a summary of the meeting intent and welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted without changes. The Co-Chairs noted that the intent of the structure of the agenda was to provide an update on efforts at implementation of EM in IATTC fisheries since the IATTC adopted interim minimum standards for electronic monitoring (C-24-09) last year, and for those updates to inform a discussion of next steps

3. Presentation by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and collaborators

The Nature Conservancy provided a brief presentation on three EM projects relevant to the IATTC.

3a. EM Pilot Program on Small-Scale Purse-Seine Vessels in Ecuador

The Nature Conservancy provided an overview of a pilot project on small (<class 6) purse seine vessels done in collaboration with Ecuadorian industry, assessing the viability of EM data collection on small vessels. Mr. Álvaro Terán explained that the work involves three purse seiners of 32, 44, and 46 meters in length, with the main goal of developing standards for an EM system for this vessel category. Data is already available for a year and a half of operations, and the project has expanded to include verification of shark catches through electronic monitoring, in collaboration with the company Satlink.

3b. EM Research with Edge AI in Costa Rica

Costa Rica presented on efforts to implement EM on small longline vessels, with and without human observers, including a pilot project to use Edge AI to analyze EM records. Mr. José Miguel Carvajal presented the results of the EM work conducted in Costa Rica. He reported that the project involves a 22-meter longline vessel, aiming to develop EM standards for this type of fishing operation. The pilot has been collecting data for four months, using both human observers and EM systems with three onboard cameras.

3c. INCOPECA/CNIP/IATTC/TNC Costa Rica: EM Pilot Project on Longline Vessels

Combined with the above agenda item.

4. FIP of Ecuadorian Industrial Longline Fishery (targeting Mahi-mahi and Swordfish Conservation, etc.) – Industry-driven EM Pilot Project on Industrial Longliners with Zunibal and WWF Ecuador

Co-chair Guillermo Morán presented on an industry-led Electronic Monitoring (EM) pilot for Ecuador's industrial longline fleet, developed jointly with Zunibal and WWF Ecuador. The pilot is generating results that could inform future inclusion and improvements to the IATTC's provisional minimum EM standards under Resolution C-24-09.

5. Questions and Discussion on Presentations

The group discussed the promise and limitations of the various pilot projects. The discussion covered, among other topics, power and data transmission requirements for small vessels implementing EM, how long it takes to get from record collection to processed data, projected costs for broader implementation, and whether these projects have generated any data submitted to the IATTC Secretariat.

- The Secretariat was asked if they had received any EM data in 2025 in accordance with the standards adopted under [Resolution C-24-09 on Provisional Minimum Standards for an](#)

EMS. IATTC staff replied that to date, no data have been received, but noted that Ecuador and Costa Rica are still reviewing their pilot data and intend to share it with IATTC soon.

- A participant asked whether current EM technology allows for determination of species and size (length/weight) of catch, including discards? IATTC staff indicated that further training of the relevant algorithms is underway and that this technology is not yet mature, but some size data is being generated for some species such as silky sharks.
- Participants asked about the cost of the EM pilots and for implementing EM. Exact numbers were not shared, but it was noted that current EM costs are higher than use of human observers and this dynamic may persist in the near-term. At present, it is common for pilots to be funded by some combination of industry associations and 3rd party support such as from NGOs.
- Another question asked about the lag time between EM data collection, review and the availability of the resulting data. Mr. Moran shared that for Ecuador’s pilot, analysis currently takes about 30 days and takes place Spain; but plans are in place to transition to cloud-based analysis to accelerate reviews.

6. Discussion on the Objectives and Scope of EM within the IATTC

The Co-Chairs noted that no voluntary data submissions have been made to the Secretariat pursuant to C-24-09, and that such submissions would be useful to inform review of the Resolution as scheduled in 2027. Several CPCs expressed an intention to submit such data in the near future.

The Co-Chairs reviewed the draft goals and scope for EM in IATTC summarized in “WGEM-01-01: Outcomes-of-the-EMS-workshops” and asked if the CPCs consider them to be appropriate to guide the work of the WGEM.

Goals

The EPO EMS should generate data for use in both scientific and compliance related activities, as defined by the Members.

Scope

The EPO EMS should include the following types of vessels operating in the IATTC Convention Area: tuna purse-seine vessels of all size classes; all longline vessels of 12 meters in length overall or more and motherships of longline vessels less than 12 meters in length, and transshipment authorized carriers.

CPCs had no objections to the proposed goals and scope. There were some suggestions to prioritize work on longline coverage in the short term, and to add to the goals an aspiration to replace human observers with EM, but no consensus on these points. The group also discussed the need for a work plan.

7. Frequency and Format of Future Meetings

The group discussed the possibility of holding two intersessional meetings in 2026 to further discuss goals and scope, to develop a work plan, to work with the Secretariat on preferred formats for data submissions, to review data and other information submitted to the Secretariat and working group regarding the implementation of EM in the EPO. The Co-Chairs suggested that the two intersessional meetings would be in virtual format, and the group requested that each meeting consist of two short 2-3 hour sessions. One delegation asked the co-chairs to explore the possibility of holding a meeting on the margins of the SAC meeting in 2026.

8. Other Business

No other matters were discussed.

9. Recommendations to the Commission

The group concluded that progress is needed beyond the current voluntary data submission model. It recommended holding two intersessional meetings in 2026 to advance its work subject to the availability of funding for interpretation services. The anticipated focus of these meetings would include review of EM data from the U.S. program relative to the standards established under Resolution C-24-09 (2024) and addressing fisheries with observer coverage gaps where EM could improve data collection.

The EMWG recommended that the Commission consider allocating the necessary funds to support holding two virtual intersessional meetings of the working group between now and the next annual meeting, or one virtual meeting and one on the margins of the SAC meeting.

10. Next Meeting

To be determined.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 hours on 25 August 2025 in Panama.

Annex 1

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