



# Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) Annual Meeting, August 7–11, 2023

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



## COMPLIANCE PROCESSES

### 2023 Asks

- Establish a work plan with timelines to further strengthen the Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures' procedures and outcomes, including developing by 2024 a hierarchy of infractions and a scheme of responses to improve compliance.

### Background

A strong and transparent compliance process improves fisheries management by holding regional fisheries management organization (RFMO) members accountable. In 2022, the IATTC strengthened the procedures and outcomes of its Committee for the Review of Implementation of Measures. Implementation of these improvements is now needed, as are further advances. ISSF and Pew Charitable Trusts have recommendations to improve RFMO compliance processes in workshop reports: [2020 report](#), [2021 report](#), [2022 report](#).

### Priorities to Progress

- Develop audit points for IATTC measures

## RFMO Compliance Information & Resources



## EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES (HARVEST STRATEGIES)

### 2023 Asks

- Adopt a harvest strategy for North Pacific albacore, including a Harvest Control Rule.
- For South Pacific albacore, collaborate with the Pacific Community (SPC) and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) to develop a harvest strategy and implement the 2023 recommendations of the IATTC Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC).
- Adopt interim reference points for skipjack tuna.
- Establish and convene a scientist-manager dialogue group to advance management procedures for other tuna stocks.

## Background

The new Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Fisheries Standard requires a higher level of performance for RFMO-managed fisheries. To achieve this level of performance, the IATTC must agree on harvest strategies or risk missing the required deadlines to implement harvest strategy outcomes.

IATTC must adopt and implement comprehensive, precautionary harvest strategies because MSC has firm deadlines for Principle 1 conditions for certified tuna fisheries. MSC certifications for North Pacific albacore will be suspended if IATTC does not adopt harvest strategies by May 2025. In addition, to adopt a compatible harvest strategy for South Pacific albacore, the IATTC needs to engage with the WCPFC's ongoing management strategy evaluation (MSE) process.

## Priorities to Progress

- Ensure continued support, and secure funding, for all target tunas MSE, following guidelines from [C-16-02](#) and [C-19-07](#).
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## FAD MANAGEMENT

### 2023 Asks

- Require fully non-entangling fish aggregating device (FAD) designs without netting or meshed materials.
- Adopt the definition of “biodegradable” proposed by the FAD Working Group and establish a timeline for transition to 100% biodegradable FADs.

## Background

FAD designs should avoid the use of netting and be constructed mainly with biodegradable materials to reduce the impact of FAD structure on the ecosystem. IATTC currently allows netting in FAD construction ([C-19-01](#)), has no agreed definition of biodegradable FADs, and does not have an effective FAD marking scheme or FAD recovery mechanisms.

## Priorities to Progress

- Develop and implement science-based limits on FAD deployments and FAD sets.
- Adopt an effective FAD marking scheme for both FAD structure and geolocating buoy.
- Adopt clear rules for FAD ownership and stronger rules for FAD buoy activation and deactivation.
- Develop and implement a FAD-recovery policy.

## [FAD Management Information & Resources](#)

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## TUNA STOCK CONSERVATION

### 2023 Asks

- Ensure all Members implement Resolution C-21-04 fully so that the fishing mortality for bigeye and yellowfin does not exceed the average fishing mortality during 2017-2019.

### Background

Based on bigeye and yellowfin stocks indicators, it is estimated that the fishing mortality has not exceeded the status quo (i.e., average fishing mortality during the period 2017-2019). Therefore, the IATTC Scientific Staff recommended no changes to the Resolution C-21-04.

### Priorities to Progress

- Conduct independent reviews of bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna assessments.
- Continue to improve assessments and risk analysis for tropical tunas.
- Review and update Resolution C-03-05 on Data Provision.

### [Tuna Conservation Information & Resources](#)



## BYCATCH MITIGATION & SHARK PROTECTIONS

### 2023 Ask

- Amend Resolution C-05-03 to require that all retained sharks be landed with fins naturally attached without exceptions.
- Amend Resolution C-11-02 to include updated seabird mitigation options (e.g., hook shielding devices), including harmonization with IOTC and WCPFC.

### Background

Some shark and seabird species are declining in abundance or are threatened. Current IATTC shark and seabird conservation resolutions are outdated and do not include best-practice mitigation techniques. IATTC needs to improve its measures and strengthen efforts to monitor and mitigate the bycatch of vulnerable species in both purse seine and longline fisheries.

## Priorities to Progress

- Develop and adopt a recovery plan for oceanic white-tip sharks.
- Develop new best-handling and release practices for elasmobranchs caught by longline gear and not retained, including harmonization with the WCPFC.

### [Bycatch Reduction Information & Resources](#)

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## ELECTRONIC MONITORING AND REPORTING & OBSERVER COVERAGE

### 2023 Ask

- Endorse the recommendations of the IATTC Staff on Electronic Monitoring (EM).
- Establish a fleet-wide observer program (human or electronic or a combination) for class 1-5 purse seine vessels.

## 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 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.

## Priorities to Progress

- Continue to develop EM program through EM Working Group and EMS Workplan.
- Adopt measures to require observer coverage (human and/or electronic) on class 1-5 purse seine vessels and to increase coverage on longline vessels from 5% as progress toward 100% coverage in industrial tuna fisheries, including all vessels engaged in at sea transshipment, by 2024.

### [Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Information & Resources](#)

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## SUPPLY AND TENDER VESSELS

### Background

Supply vessels are used in many oceans by purse seine vessels fishing with FADs. IATTC adopted [Resolution C-99-07](#) on FADs in 1999, which prohibits the use of supply/tender/auxiliary vessels operating in support of vessels fishing on dFADs. There is some [evidence](#) that small class purse seine vessels and other types of vessels — which are not required to carry observers — are being used as supply and tender vessels to deploy and service FADs in the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO).

### Priorities to Progress

- Through the Review Committee, investigate the use of small class purse seine vessels and other types of vessels as supply and tender vessels to deploy and/or service dFADs and address such non-compliance.
  - Consider amending Resolution C-99-07 to include an applicable definition of auxiliary vessels to allow for the implementation of FAD recovery programs and/or projects in the EPO, as recommended by the IATTC SAC.
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## VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS

### Background

IATTC's vessel monitoring system (VMS) measure must be strengthened and aligned with [best practice standards](#).

### Priorities to Progress

- Amend Resolution [C-14-02](#) to strengthen the IATTC VMS, including by establishing a centralized or partly centralized program so that VMS data are provided simultaneous and in near-real time to the IATTC Secretariat and the flag State.
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## 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.
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