

**INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION**

**92<sup>ND</sup> MEETING**

Mexico City, Mexico

24-28 July 2017

**PROPOSAL IATTC-92 L-1**

**SUBMITTED BY MEXICO**

**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 obligatory to have a coverage of 5% of fishing effort made by its longline fishing vessels more than 20 meters long.

Within the recommendations for the current year on the longline fishery, the scientific staff of the IATTC has noted the following:

*In Resolution C-11-08, the Commission established that “each CPC shall ensure that at least 5% of the fishing effort made by its longline fishing vessels greater than 20 m length overall carry a scientific observer”. 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; studies show that 20% coverage is the minimum level required for such estimates.*

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

In this context, it is considered advisable that the current resolution be modified in order to accommodate a necessary and greater coverage of 20% in a gradual manner.

The changes that should be made to the current resolution are indicated below.

*The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Mexico City, Mexico, on the occasion of its 92nd 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, in particular, sea turtles, sharks and seabirds;

*Noting* 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 required for many years to carry 100% scientific observers aboard, in accordance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program and that this effort has resulted in a greater knowledge of the fishery and its interactions;

*Taking into account* and reaffirming the recommendation by the Eighth Meeting of the Commission’s Scientific Advisory Committee that it be increased to 20% in order to collect more data on bycatches by longline vessels, and that the resulting operational data be submitted to the Commission;

*Agrees that:*

1. 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 2018, coverage shall be at least 10%.
  - b. from 1 January 2020, coverage shall be at least 15%.

- c. from 1 January 2022, coverage shall be at least 20%.
2. Fishing effort shall be determined by the number of fishing days.
3. Each CPC shall ensure that the coverage by observers will be representative of the activities of its fleet.
4. Each CPC shall update the list of its vessels, indicating specifically which vessels are active, inactive, and/or sunk, and if possible inform the IATTC staff of the duration of their fishing operations.
5. The main task of the scientific observer shall be to record any available biological information, the catches of target fish species, species composition, and any available biological information, as well as any interactions with non-target species such as sea turtles, seabirds and sharks.
6. The Director, in cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Committee, shall review the reporting format detailing the required data to be collected by scientific observers on longline vessels and will communicate it to the Commission.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Evaluate the use of electronic monitoring systems in order to establish minimum standards and extend observer coverage in longline fisheries.