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**CHARACTERIZING AND CLASSIFYING LONGLINE FISHERIES IN THE IATTC  
CONVENTION AREA: UPDATED**

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This document was produced in response to an EB-02 recommendation that, “*the staff, in coordination with CPCs, develop and present to the Commission results of a process to characterize and classify the longline fleets and their fisheries in the Convention Area, distinguishing their dynamics and differentiated impacts, as well as the catchability of species, whether directed, associated or incidental.*” Furthermore, the EB-03 adopted the recommendation, “*that the work initiated and described in [SAC-16-09](#) be continued, so that in coordination with the CPCs, field work and more precise evaluations on individual aspects of each fleet, the different segments exclusively of the longline fleets targeting species under the Commission’s mandate can be distinguished.*” Since those meetings, comments and technical input received from the SAC, EBWG and stakeholders have been reviewed and incorporated, resulting in the revised and more detailed longline fleet categories presented in this document.

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**SUMMARY**

A refined and updated classification of longline vessels targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) is essential for strengthening IATTC documentation, guiding research and monitoring priorities, supporting management decisions and improving clarity for CPCs, data providers, scientists, and policy makers, particularly with regard to implementation of, and compliance with the measures adopted

by the IATTC. This effort focuses on establishing clear, standardized categories—particularly for smaller-scale longline vessels—and to support consistent use and definition of terms (e.g., “artisanal”, “small-scale”, “industrial”, “large-scale”) in relevant IATTC Resolutions. Clear definitions will help CPCs determine which vessels are obligated, encouraged or exempt from compliance with specific measures as well as to guide research priorities (e.g., development of Best Handling and Release Practices (BHRPs) for vulnerable<sup>1</sup> non-target species such as sharks, turtles etc.). Standardized classifications will also enhance data-reporting consistency (e.g., under Resolution [C-03-05](#)) and improve estimates of total removals from these fleets. Because many IATTC Resolutions exempt, or refer to, “artisanal” or “small-scale” vessels without providing explicit definitions, reporting practices have varied among CPCs. A transparent, technically grounded classification system will help resolve these inconsistencies.

Although the process remained unchanged and continued to include four stages, the number of proposed preliminary categories in Stage 2 was revised from three to five based on expert feedback during and post EB-03. For transparency, and as a reminder, the stages are reproduced from [SAC-16-09](#) and summarized below:

**1. Review the existing situation.**

This stage involved examining current classifications of longline vessels operating within the IATTC Convention Area across relevant instruments, processes, and initiatives. The review incorporated information from previous and ongoing projects, including the FAO Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Projects, Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS), Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs), and guidelines for developing Best Handling and Release Practices (BHRPs). These sources provided descriptions and fleet characteristics—including those for “small-scale coastal (‘artisanal’) fisheries”—that could help inform the development of a formal classification system.

**2. Prepare revised preliminary categories.**

Building on SAC-16-09 and discussions at the EBWG and SAC, IATTC staff developed a revised proposal containing five preliminary longline fleet categories: “*large-scale longline*”, “*advanced medium-scale longline*”, “*medium-scale longline*”, “*small-scale commercial longline*”, and “*small-scale coastal longline*”. This draft proposal was circulated to CPCs—and through them to other relevant stakeholders—to solicit feedback and request any additional documentation that could further refine the proposed categories as needed. This request was shared via Memorandum Ref.: 0074-410 (23 February 2026) with the deadline for CPC input extended through 20 March 2026.

**3. Refine the categories based on expert feedback.**

Comments and documentation received from CPCs and other experts during Stage 2 was subsequently used to refine the preliminary categories and ensure that the proposed classification better reflects the diversity of longline operations in the Convention Area.

**4. Develop recommendations.**

Based on the staff’s review and integration of expert feedback, recommendations on longline category definitions will be presented, as recommended, to the EBWG, the SAC, and the Commission, as appropriate, in 2026.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless specified otherwise, including but not limited to citations to vulnerability assessments and any qualitative/quantitative scores (e.g., [BYC-10 INF-B](#); [SAC-13-11](#); [SAC-14-12](#)), the staff’s definition of “vulnerable species” refers to the species that, in the *sensu latu*, and due to their low-productive life-history traits (i.e. K species in r/K selection theory), are more susceptible to the impacts of fisheries and other anthropogenic activities on these species or their habitat and ecosystem. This includes the marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles and the elasmobranchs.

The outcome of this process is a refined set of five broad longline vessel categories, developed using existing information and expert input from EB-03, SAC-16 and in response to Memorandum Ref.: 0074-410. It is important to note that not all CPCs will recognize these five categories in their national regulations—some distinguish only between large-scale “industrial” and small-scale “artisanal” longline fisheries, with no intermediate classes. Because vessel characteristics vary widely among CPCs, the categories were instead defined using general operational attributes that describe how, where, when, and why longline vessels fish for tuna and tuna-like species under the Antigua Convention in the EPO. These attributes include, for example, the vessel’s autonomy (i.e., time at sea), fishing areas, target species and technologies used, vessel size and design, and preservation and storage capabilities. It is important to note that some vessels—particularly the two small-scale classes defined below—may use other gear types in addition to longline; however, the proposed classification herein focuses exclusively on longline to better address the EB recommendations.

**“Large-scale longline”** these vessels primarily consist of vessels from distant-water nations, and in general, may be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: long durations – capacity to operate far from the coast (see ‘Fishing area’) and stay at sea from several months to over a year; and
- b. Length: longline vessels with a registered length commonly >30 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel-inboard engine(s); and
- d. Electronic equipment: sophisticated fish-finding and navigational electronics (e.g., acoustic doppler current profilers, SONAR, echo-sounders); and
- e. Deck equipment: mechanical – hydraulic spool, winches, and/or line shooters to deploy and recover line and associated gear; and
- f. Preservation method: advanced freezing capabilities (i.e., a refrigeration system<sup>2</sup> to preserve fish at ultra-low temperatures for extended time periods); and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally >2,500 hooks per set; and
- h. Target species: tunas, billfishes and some shark species; typically does not change seasonally; and
- i. Transshipment of catch may occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- j. Fishing area: due to its characteristics, particularly its autonomy, the vessel generally operates far from the territory of its Flag State or home port, and at a considerable distance from the coast, primarily on the high seas, beyond the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). However, the vessel may also fish in the EPO within areas under national jurisdiction under a license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement; and
- k. Market: catch is commonly utilized domestically and at times may be exported

**“Advanced medium-scale longline”** these vessels may generally be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: capable of long durations – capacity to stay at sea for several weeks or months; commonly >25 days but generally < 90 days; and
- b. Length: longline vessels with a registered length commonly 20–30 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel-inboard engine(s); and
- d. Electronic equipment: may have sophisticated fish-finding and navigational electronics (e.g., acoustic doppler current profilers, SONAR, echo-sounders); and
- e. Deck equipment: mechanical – hydraulic spool, winches, and/or line shooters to deploy and recover line and associated gear; and
- f. Preservation method: may have advanced freezing capacity (i.e., a refrigeration system<sup>2</sup> to

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<sup>2</sup> Any mechanized system for freezing, cooling and maintaining the temperature of the catch. Including, but not limited to, icemakers, refrigerated seawater, flooded brine, spray brine, and blast freezers.

- preserve fish at ultra-low temperatures for extended time periods); and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally 1,000–2,500 hooks per set; and
- h. Mothership<sup>3</sup>: the principal vessel may operate as a mothership towing up to 10 boats to and from the fishing grounds; and
- i. Target species: tunas, billfishes, dorado, and some shark species; typically does not change seasonally; and
- j. Transshipment of catch may occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)<sup>4</sup>); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels can fish at a considerable distance from the coast, including outside EEZs, but generally operate within the EEZs either of their own flag State or in another EEZ, other than that of their flag State, under license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement; and
- l. Market: catch is commonly utilized domestically and at times may be exported

**“Medium-scale longline”** these vessels may generally be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: moderate durations at sea, commonly <25 days; and
- b. Length: in general, longline vessels with a registered length commonly >10 m–20 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel-inboard engines; and
- d. Electronic equipment: some sophisticated fish-finding and navigational electronics (e.g., GPS, radar, echo-sounder); and
- e. Deck equipment: may be mechanical or manual – hydraulic spool or hand-deployed and recovered line; and
- f. Preservation method: commonly use ice either carried from port or made aboard at sea; and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally 500–2,000 hooks per set; and
- h. Mothership<sup>3</sup>: the principal vessel may operate as a mothership towing up to 10 boats to and from the fishing grounds; and
- i. Target species: tunas, billfishes, some sharks, dorado, and other large pelagic fishes; target species may change depending on the season and market conditions; and
- j. Transshipment of catch does not occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels can fish at a considerable distance from the coast, including outside EEZs, but generally operate within EEZs either of their own flag State or in another EEZ under license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement; and
- l. Market: domestic and export markets

**“Small-scale commercial longline”** Although these vessels account for a limited amount of the total catch in the Antigua Convention Area, reporting data on catch and effort for species under the purview of the Commission will facilitate improvements to IATTC’s estimates of total removals. It is important to note that these vessels may use other gear types in addition to longline, depending on season and market conditions. In general, these vessels may generally be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: short durations at sea; commonly <5 days; and
- b. Length: in general, longline vessels with a registered length commonly <10–12 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel- or gasoline-inboard engines; and
- d. Electronic equipment: some vessels are equipped with basic electronics (e.g., VHF radio, GPS, echo-sounder, etc.); and
- e. Deck equipment: manual – may haul by hand into baskets or tubs or use a hand-cranked line

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<sup>3</sup> “Mothership” is defined as a longline fishing vessel that tows up to 10 small-scale coastal (‘artisanal’) longline vessels (fiber-glass skiffs or pangas) to distant fishing areas, and whose purpose is to fish, supply water, fuel, food, bait and other fishing inputs and in turn store the fish caught by the ‘artisanal’ fishing vessels in their holds.

<sup>4</sup> Noting C-22-23 states, “For the purposes of this Resolution, “Large-scale tuna fishing vessels” are defined as all vessels fishing beyond areas of national jurisdiction or beyond each CPC-controlled areas and targeting tuna or tuna-like species.”

- drum; and
- f. Preservation method: ice; no refrigeration systems; and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally  $\leq 1,000$ ; and
- h. Mothership<sup>3</sup>: not applicable
- i. Target species: mixed or multi-species fisheries, switching target species from dorado to tunas, billfishes, and sharks depending on the season and market conditions; and
- j. Transshipment of catch does not occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels primarily fish within the areas under national jurisdiction of their own flag State or of another EPO coastal State; and
- l. Market: commonly used for domestic markets, and on occasion export markets

**“Small-scale coastal longline”** these vessels, often referred to as *“artisanal”*, which operate primarily within areas close to the coast, are generally associated with subsistence or local markets, although catches may also enter export supply chains. They account for an even smaller amount of the total catch in the Antigua Convention Area, but improved reporting of their catch and effort for species under the Commission’s purview is useful for strengthening IATTC estimates of total removals. The importance of documenting these fisheries has been explicitly recognized through regional data-collection efforts under two IATTC-led projects financed by the FAO Common Oceans Program—*the Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Tuna Projects, Phases 1 and 2*. These vessels may use other gear types in addition to longline, depending on season and market conditions. In general, these vessels may be best defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: short durations at sea; commonly  $< 5$  days; duration increases if vessel is used as a “catcher” vessel aboard a mothership; and
- b. Length: in general, vessels with a registered length  $< 10$  m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by gasoline outboard engines; and
- d. Electronic equipment: may have some basic electronics (e.g., VHF radio, GPS, etc.); and
- e. Deck equipment: manual – likely hauls by hand into baskets or tubs or use a hand-cranked line drum; and
- f. Preservation method: ice; no refrigeration systems; and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally  $\leq 1,000$ ; and
- h. Mothership<sup>3</sup>: vessel may operate as a “catcher” vessel in coordination with a mothership; and
- i. Target species: mixed or multi-species fisheries, switching target species from dorado to tunas, billfishes, and sharks depending on the time of the year, seasonal prices and other market conditions; and
- j. Transshipment of catch does not occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels primarily fish within the areas under national jurisdiction of their own flag State or of another EPO coastal State, unless operating as a “catcher” vessel in coordination with a mothership and may then operate outside the EEZ; and
- l. Market: commonly used for local consumption; may be sold in domestic markets; catcher-vessel product may be exported

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The effective application of IATTC Resolutions depends on clear and standardized definitions of the longline vessels to which they apply. To assess how longline fleets are currently addressed, a comprehensive review of IATTC’s active resolutions was conducted to identify those pertaining to longline vessels and those referencing “artisanal” or “industrial” fleets operating within the IATTC Convention Area (Table 1). This review revealed that no formal, standardized definitions of “artisanal” or “industrial” longline vessels currently exist within IATTC Resolutions or supporting documents. This absence of clear definitions reflects long-standing difficulties in characterizing the longline fishery in the eastern Pacific

Ocean (EPO)—challenges previously noted (e.g., see [SAC-08-07b](#), [SAC-08-07d](#), [SAC-07-06b\(ii\)](#), [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#)). These challenges stem in part from country-specific distinctions in vessel classification (e.g., under FAO’s Common Oceans Program the *Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction* (ABNJ) projects), which complicate efforts to establish consistent criteria across the region. As a result, the lack of clarity surrounding longline vessel classifications has hindered progress on key aspects of fisheries governance, including standardized data collection and submission to the IATTC, as well as the effective implementation and compliance with management and research-related resolutions.

Initially, all fishing vessels in the EPO whose catch was reported and recorded by the Commission were classified according to their carrying capacity in short tons (i.e., 1016.05 kg). As described in the IATTC [Annual Report](#) for 1953 (p.23): *“Since vessels of different size fish to some extent in different areas, the smaller vessels going to the less distant waters, it is also of value to determine separately the average catch-per-day of tuna fishing for different size classes. Six size-categories of vessels, based on fish capacity, are employed in tabulating these and other data.”* The Commission decided to replace the reference to short tons with a reference to metric tons (i.e., 1000 kg), as reflected in the [Annual Report](#) for 1999 (p.16), which, as in previous such reports, also stressed that the value would be modified according to the effective amounts of the catch landed: *“The owner’s or builder’s estimates of vessel carrying capacities are used until landing records indicate that revision of these is appropriate. The vessels are grouped by carrying capacity, into the following size classes for reporting purposes: class 1, less than 46 metric tons (mt); class 2, 46–91 mt; class 3, 92–181 mt; class 4, 182–272 mt; class 5, 273–363 mt; class 6, more than 363 mt.”* It was made clear however, that the detailed records did not include *“most longline vessels”* nor *“sport-fishing vessels and small craft such as canoes and launches”* ([Annual Report for 1999](#), p.16).

Besides reporting, this classification was essentially used for the purpose of determining the applicability to purse-seine vessels to the various conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission (e.g., which vessels must observe a period of closure) or within the framework of their obligations under the AIDCP (e.g., the obligation for class 6 vessels to carry an observer on board).

With regards to longline vessels, they were separated into categories, sometimes overlapping, for different purposes. Currently, there are several such categories, which are as follows, in the chronological order of their establishment:

1. the *“longline fishing vessels larger than 24 m overall length”*<sup>5</sup> or *“LSTLFVs”* must be included in a List or Record to be authorized to engage in fishing activities for tuna and tuna-like species in the Convention Area, as stipulated in Resolution [C-11-05](#), which is still in force.
2. the *“longline fishing vessels greater than 20 meters length overall”* must carry a scientific observer on board as prescribed in Resolution C-11-08 amended by Resolution [C-19-08](#).
3. the *“large-scale tuna fishing vessels”* which, for the purposes of Resolution C-12-07 as amended later by Resolution [C-22-03](#) on transshipment *“are defined as all vessels fishing beyond areas of national jurisdiction or beyond each CPC-controlled areas and targeting tuna or tuna-like species”*.
4. Resolution [C-24-09](#) on electronic monitoring standards distinguishes longline vessels as *“small-sized longline vessels (<20 m LOA)”*, *“medium-sized longline vessels (20–24 m LOA)”*, and *“large-sized longline vessels (>24 m LOA)”*.
5. Resolution [C-25-09](#) on silky sharks mentions, *“vessels of less than 12 m length overall using manually operated fishing gear (i.e., without mechanical or hydraulic winches) and that do not deliver to motherships at any time during the fishing trip are excluded from the application of this resolution.”*

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<sup>5</sup>Noting, on the [Vessel Register](#), a standardized length definition is lacking and different length types may be reported (e.g., length may be recorded as “Length Overall”, “Length Registered”, “Length Between Perpendiculars” or “Type of Length Unknown”).

It is therefore evident that neither of the two approaches, a classification based on carrying capacity or on only specific functions or purposes of the classification, is satisfactory and responds to the recommendation put forward by the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG), as quoted above.

In the research for a more satisfactory approach, it is important to consider the following elements. The “large” longline vessels in these Resolutions primarily encompass those commonly referred to as “industrial”, most often from distant water nations, which target tunas and billfish in offshore areas a significant distance from the coast ([SAC-08-07b](#)). Conversely, for the vessels smaller than 20 m, IATTC Resolutions often simply refer to “artisanal” fisheries, which potentially leads to confusion by IATTC’s Members and Cooperating Non-Members (CPCs) regarding to which of their vessels this category pertains. As an example, Resolution [C-03-05](#)—mandating data provision of catches and effort for all fisheries—refers to “artisanal” in its paragraph 5b, “*Catch data from artisanal vessels may be reported as total annual catches, without data on fishing effort*” but does not explicitly define “artisanal”. As a result, some CPCs do not report data for these vessels ([IATTC-102 INF-D](#)). Moreover, documents produced under the Common Oceans ABNJ project, highlighted substantial dynamics of these small-scale coastal or “artisanal” fisheries in the Central American region ([SAC-07-06b\(ii\)](#), [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#)) under Common Oceans [ABNJ Tuna Project Phase 1](#)) as well as its expansion into Mexico, Peru and Ecuador ([SAC-16 INF-V](#), [SAC-16-INF-W](#) under Common Oceans [ABNJ Tuna Project Phase 2](#)), depending not only on a vessel’s size but also on where, when and how a vessel fishes. Some of these vessels have the operational capacity to travel far offshore into oceanic waters with “*nodriza*” (mothership) boats that tow “*fibras*” (fiber-glass skiffs or pangas), while independent *fibras* are spatially restricted to fishing in inshore waters (Martínez-Ortiz *et al.* 2015). Additionally, the small-scale coastal (“artisanal”) fleet’s target species, catch composition and gear change seasonally switching from dorado to tunas-billfishes-sharks (Martínez-Ortiz *et al.* 2015), further complicating potential definitions of the “artisanal” fleets.

The need for defining these vessel and fleet characteristics is also important for identifying impacts and mitigation options on species interacting with various fisheries, including in ecological risk assessments (e.g., Ecological Assessment for the Sustainable Impacts of Fisheries (EASI-Fish)) and for developing guidelines on best handling and release practices (BHRPs) required under the IATTC’s initial Strategic Science Plan ([SSP](#)) and the updated SSP ([SAC-16-07](#)). For example, EASI-Fish (Griffiths *et al.* 2019) was developed to identify potentially vulnerable non-target, often data-poor, species by addressing cumulative impacts of all fisheries, including small-scale coastal fisheries operating in the EPO. Because the more “industrial” longline fisheries (i.e., those vessels pertaining to Resolution [C-11-05](#)) fish differently than many of the small-scale coastal longline fisheries, BHRPs (e.g., [SAC-15-11](#)) may also need to account for varying fishing strategies and vessel characteristics among fleets. These dynamics in fleet characteristics underscore the need for a process to identify and clearly define various fleet dynamics in Resolutions for CPCs to better understand and respond appropriately to IATTC mandates.

A practical starting point may include defining vessel and fleet characteristics to consider in revisions of mandates in Resolution [C-03-05](#) on data provision. In response to a SAC recommendation ([SAC-12-16](#)), ongoing efforts have been underway by IATTC staff, in collaboration with CPCs and other relevant stakeholders, to facilitate data improvement workshops and produce recommendations to update Resolution [C-03-05](#) and its corresponding technical [specifications](#) (see [SAC-12-09](#), [WSDAT-01-01](#), [WSDAT-01-Rpt](#), [SAC-14 INF-Q](#), [IATTC-102-04 Para 4](#), [WSDAT-02](#), [WSDAT-02-RPT](#), [SAC-16 INF-O](#)). Updating this Resolution, adopted over two decades ago, will help to better align data provision with the staff’s increase in responsibilities in correspondence with the implementation of the Antigua Convention and IATTC’s inaugural and future SSPs ([IATTC-93-06a](#), [SAC-16-07](#)). Working in collaboration with CPCs on procedures to characterize longline fleets will facilitate improved recommendations on data reporting for these fisheries, and subsequent improvements for updating Resolution [C-03-05](#), among others, regarding these fisheries.

## 1.1. Objectives

This document responds to an EBWG/SAC recommendation for the IATTC staff, in collaboration with CPCs, to further develop recommendations for the formal classification and definition of longline fisheries targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the EPO. The approach included four steps:

- (1) providing background information on IATTC’s efforts to date regarding the classification of longline fleets;
- (2) revising the preliminary classifications in [SAC-16-09](#) by incorporating the results from step 1 and feedback from regional experts during EB-03 and SAC-16. The categories—defined primarily by longline fishing operations (i.e., how, when, where and what these vessels catch)—are:
  - large-scale longline,
  - advanced medium-scale longline,
  - medium-scale longline,
  - small-scale commercial longline,
  - small-scale coastal longline;
- (3) continuing collaborations with CPCs to obtain feedback on the revised categories and further refine the definitions;
- (4) recommending definitions of the categories to the EBWG, SAC, and the Commission as appropriate.

The recommendations from this work are intended to guide the Commission in formally classifying and defining longline vessels for inclusion in relevant Resolutions (see e.g., Table 1) and documents. For example, resolutions and documents related to data collection and provision (e.g., Resolution [C-03-05](#), [SAC-12-09](#)), electronic monitoring (e.g., Resolution [C-24-09](#)), BHRPs (e.g., Resolution [C-25-08](#), [C-19-04](#), [C-11-02](#), [SAC-15-11](#)), silky shark conservation measures ([C-25-09](#)), ecological risk assessments that identify potentially vulnerable species to the cumulative impacts of various fisheries operating in the Convention Area (e.g., [SAC-08-07b](#), [SAC-08-07d](#), [SAC-13-11](#)) and observer requirements (e.g., Resolution [C-19-08](#)), among others. Such measures should clearly define which fisheries are mandated, or encouraged to comply, or excluded from these Resolutions, notably concerning small-scale “artisanal” vessels.

## 2. REVIEW OF FLEET CHARACTERISTICS: [COMMON OCEANS ABNJ TUNA PROJECT \(PHASE 1\)](#)

Fleet characteristics for Central American countries—derived primarily from information collected prior to 2015, with updates incorporated where available—were documented under the project “*Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction*”, commonly referred to as the “Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I Project.” That project characterized a wide range of fisheries including multi-species and multi-gear fisheries (primarily longline and gillnet fisheries) of EPO coastal States, with particular emphasis on gears that targeted sharks or caught sharks as bycatch. Fisheries definitions and the substantial variability in fleet characteristics among flag States are described in foundational project documents ([SAC-07-06b\(ii\)](#); [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#)) and are reproduced here for reference (see Tables 2–3). These documented differences highlight the lack of consistent fleet category definitions across countries; readers are referred to the foundational reports for detailed discussion of data collection, research, management, challenges and recommendations.

In contrast, the present document focuses exclusively on characterizing longline fleets that target tuna and tuna-like species under the purview of the Commission, with the objective of proposing preliminary longline fleet categories. At the same time, the Commission has adopted active Resolutions that apply to species other than tuna and tuna-like species, including sea turtles, sharks and dorado, which also interact with longline fisheries (see Table 1). Nevertheless, revisiting the fleet definitions developed under the ABNJ Tuna Projects (sections 2–3) remains important to ensure that these earlier descriptions are appropriately considered when developing longline-specific fleet characteristics and classifications.

Building on this prior work will improve clarity in how fisheries are referenced across IATTC documents and Resolutions and will support, to the extent possible, the development of comparable longline fleet classifications across countries. Such consistency is essential for strengthening research, data collection, submission and data quality, and for enhancing the development, adoption, and implementation of IATTC measures, rules, and processes.

### **2.1. Belize**

Before 2015, the Belizean flagged longline fleet (which is primarily comprised of vessels owned by Chinese Taipei companies) operating in the IATTC Convention Area has been characterized as a high-seas ‘industrial’ fleet. While Belize is not an EPO coastal State, it utilizes landing ports in Panama, El Salvador, and prior to 2020 Costa Rica. Eleven such industrial longline vessels were documented to fish in the EPO in 2014 and reported catches of sharks as both target and bycatch. Size (Length Overall: LOA) of these vessels was not included in the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I Project documents, apart from a fluctuation in gross registered tons (GRT) with a minimum of 25 GRT to a maximum of 915 GRT.

### **2.2. Costa Rica**

Under the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I Project (pre-2015), Costa Rican commercial fishing vessels operating with longline and other gears were classified into five categories: small-scale (gillnet and longline vessels), medium-scale (longline vessels and green stick)<sup>6</sup>, advanced (longline vessels), semi-industrial (trawl vessels), and vessels facilitating the unloading of foreign longline fleets (primarily from Belize, but also from Chinese Taipei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Panama, Georgia, El Salvador, and the United States). 2015 marked the last year that a longline vessel arrived to unload its catch in Costa Rica. Although non-longline gears were included for completeness, the present document focuses exclusively on longline vessels, consistent with the recommendations of EB-02 and EB-03.

Within the ABNJ framework, small-scale vessels were defined as operating within 3 nautical miles of the coast and primarily catching sharks incidentally (i.e., bycatch). Medium-scale longline vessels were characterized by autonomy of less than 25 days and operations within 40 nautical miles of the coast, whereas advanced longline vessels typically had autonomy exceeding 25 days and operated beyond 40 nautical miles. Both medium- and advanced-scale fleets targeted large pelagic species in the EPO, including dorado, sharks, tunas, and billfishes, with target species varying seasonally.

Subsequent studies have expanded on these classifications using national datasets and are summarized in Table 4. Pacheco Chaves et al. (2020), drawing on INCOPESCA databases, characterized medium-scale and advanced commercial longline fleets based on vessel attributes, gear configurations, operational indicators, fishing areas, and landings by species. The two fleets were found to share many characteristics, with differences largely reflecting scale and operational capacity rather than distinct fishing strategies. Medium-scale vessels (7.3–21.2 m) typically operated within 40 nm of the coast and within the EEZ, deployed 200–1,800 hooks per set, and undertook trips of up to 49 days, while advanced commercial fleets (10.7–23.8 m) operated farther from the coast and outside the EEZ, deployed up to 2,800 hooks per set, used more radio buoys, and conducted longer and more intensive trips lasting up to 88 days.

In March 2022, Costa Rica amended its Fisheries and Aquaculture Law No. 8436 through Law No. 10155 (Incopescas, 2022), updating national definitions of small-scale (“artisanal”), medium-scale, and advanced commercial fisheries. These categories were defined primarily by vessel autonomy (operating distance from shore) and fishing gear. Small-scale fisheries were described as vessels operating within 3 nautical miles of the coast using manual or traditional gears for local consumption; the medium-scale commercial fleet comprised larger motorized vessels operating within 40 nautical miles; and advanced commercial

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<sup>6</sup> Noting in 2024, all medium-scale vessels were re-categorized as advanced-scale vessels ([https://www.incopescas.go.cr/acerca\\_incopescas/transparencia\\_institucional/datos\\_abiertos.aspx](https://www.incopescas.go.cr/acerca_incopescas/transparencia_institucional/datos_abiertos.aspx))

fisheries were characterized by vessels using more sophisticated technologies—typically longline gear and in some cases green stick gear—to target pelagic species such as tuna and tuna-like species beyond 40 nautical miles from shore.

Additional studies have applied similar frameworks with variations in emphasis. Alfaro-Rodríguez (2022) defined four fishery categories based on fishing area, vessel length, gear type, and target species, with small-, medium-, and advanced-scale fisheries broadly aligning with ABNJ and national classifications, and semi-industrial purse-seine fisheries for sardines considered either non-applicable or limited in scope. Zamora-García et al. (2022) likewise identified small-, medium-, and advanced-scale fleet components, emphasizing increasing vessel size, autonomy, technology, and fishing effort across categories, while noting substantial overlap in gears and target species.

More recently, Centeno-Chaves et al. (2025) described Costa Rica’s medium- and advanced-scale longline fleets using INCOPECA data for 336 vessels (7.7–27.9 m), most of which were less than 16 m in length. These fleets targeted multiple large pelagic species, including tunas, some sharks, swordfish, marlin and dorado, among others, using surface longlines set at shallow depths (<60 m), with 200–2,800 hooks per trip. The authors reported average trip durations of approximately 22 days, longer trips for larger vessels, gross tonnage typically below 42 mt, and ice as the primary preservation method for most vessels.

Taken together, these studies indicate that distinctions between medium-scale and advanced longline fleets in Costa Rica reflect graduated increases in vessel size, autonomy, and fishing effort rather than discrete differences in gear or fishing strategy. This persistent overlap underscores the importance of clearly defined and transparent classification criteria when applying fleet categories for data reporting, management, and regulatory compliance.

### **2.3. El Salvador**

The catch by Salvadorian vessels was reported as primarily being used for domestic consumption, while some tuna, dorado and shark were exported. The industrial fleet was defined in the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I Project as vessels >10 m LOA, noting though this project included trawlers (n=46) targeting shrimp and fish for local markets and purse seiners (n=4), while the longline component of this fleet (n=3 vessels) has remained inactive since 2011. The artisanal vessels (n=8,300) were defined as those <10 m LOA—mostly pangas—that primarily deploy either gillnet or longline gear as well as hand cast nets, handlines, trawl nets and other gears that catch sharks as target and bycatch. These artisanal vessels may use more than one gear type during a single trip and may also switch their target species depending on the season.

### **2.4. Guatemala**

Guatemalan vessels have been classified based on their net registered tonnage (NRT) with four categories identified as large-scale commercial (30.1–150 NRT), medium-scale commercial (2–30 NRT), small-scale commercial (1–1.99 NRT), and artisanal (0.46–0.99 NRT). These vessels were categorized as large- and medium-scale shrimp vessels (n=31), large-scale tuna purse seiners (n=3), medium-scale longliners (n=18), small-scale gillnet/longline vessels (n=5) and small-scale artisanal vessels (n=4,680). The artisanal longline fisheries, primarily pangas, other small-scale vessels (that deploy gillnets and/or longlines) and medium-scale industrial longliners were documented to target sharks or teleosts depending on the season, while artisanal gillnet fisheries were documented to catch sharks as bycatch (Ruano et al. 2007, PROBIOMA 2005, Ruiz et al. 2000).

### **2.5. Nicaragua**

Nicaraguan vessels comprised two categories. These were identified as industrial vessels, primarily defined as vessels >15 m LOA, with mechanically operated fishing gear and electronic fish finders and location equipment (n=50), and artisanal vessels, defined as vessels <15 m LOA with fiberglass hulls and

outboard motors (n=4,330). These artisanal vessels use a multitude of gears including gillnets, handlines, cast nets and longlines. Both the industrial and the artisanal fisheries primarily target sharks, but depending on the time of year the target species change to other large pelagic species (e.g., dorado and billfishes). Although sharks were recognized as a minor economic importance compared to the shrimp and lobster fisheries.

## 2.6. Panama

At the time of ABNJ Tuna I Project (i.e., prior to 2015), Panamanian vessels were categorized as “high-seas industrial vessels”, separated by net register tonnage (NRT): 1)  $\geq 100$  NRT and 2) 10–99 NRT (n=344; 83 longliners and 261 trawl net fishing), coastal artisanal vessels (n=3,554) that are separated as 1)  $< 10$  NRT and 2) rowing boats, and international vessels (n=56 longliners and n=26 purse seiners). Tuna and billfish were considered the primary target species, while sharks were documented as bycatch by these fleets.

Following the ABNJ Tuna I Project, Panama formalized and clarified commercial fishing fleet categories through Law No. 204 ([Ley No. 204](#), 2021) and subsequent executive decrees ([Decreto ejecutivo No. 13](#), 2023; [Decreto ejecutivo No. 14](#), 2023; [Decreto Ejecutivo No. 126](#), 2017), introducing more explicit distinctions among small-scale (artisanal), medium-scale, large-scale, and international service fisheries (see Table 5). These post-2015 regulations strengthened fleet differentiation by combining vessel characteristics, operational capacity, spatial scope, and gear-specific limits, particularly for longline fisheries operating in jurisdictional waters.

Small-scale (artisanal) fishing is defined as non-mechanized or minimally mechanized activity conducted by vessels not exceeding 12 m in length and 150 horsepower, operating exclusively within waters under national jurisdiction. These vessels are prohibited from using hydraulic or mechanized hauling systems and are subject to strict gear limits, including reduced hook numbers for surface and bottom longlines and restrictions on reel numbers for vertical longlines. Operations are confined to national waters, and transshipment is prohibited.

Medium-scale fishing represents an intermediate category characterized by motorized vessels equipped with navigation instruments and mechanized fishing gear, with hull and hold volumes below 28 m<sup>3</sup> and optional refrigeration systems. While still restricted to waters under national jurisdiction, medium-scale vessels are permitted greater mechanization than artisanal vessels and may use surface and bottom longlines with standardized hook limits similar to those applied across commercial categories. Post-2015 regulations introduced additional monitoring requirements for this fleet, including mandatory vessel monitoring systems (VMS) when engaged in international service activities, while maintaining prohibitions on transshipment within jurisdictional waters.

Large-scale fishing is distinguished primarily by increased vessel size and capacity rather than fundamentally different fishing methods. These vessels have hull and hold volumes equal to or greater than 28 m<sup>3</sup>, greater autonomy, mechanized gear, and refrigeration systems. Despite their higher capacity, large-scale vessels operating within jurisdictional waters are subject to the same longline gear limits as medium-scale vessels, including restrictions on hook numbers, reel use, and prohibitions on steel or metal cables. As with other national fleets, transshipment within Panamanian waters is not permitted.

International service fishing constitutes a distinct operational category introduced and clarified following the ABNJ-1; currently, this category encompasses nationally flagged vessels operating exclusively beyond national jurisdiction. These vessels are not subject to the jurisdictional longline operational decree but are required to carry functional VMS and may conduct transshipments as donor vessels, subject to authorization by the competent authority. This category reflects a clear regulatory separation based on spatial operation rather than gear or vessel size alone.

Overall, post-2015 regulations strengthened fleet classification by formalizing vessel size thresholds, mechanization levels, spatial operating limits, and monitoring requirements. However, for longline fisheries in jurisdictional waters, medium- and large-scale fleets remain operationally similar, with distinctions driven largely by vessel capacity and autonomy rather than by discrete differences in gear configurations or fishing strategies.

Finally, the observed patterns, like in other regions involved in the ABNJ Tuna Projects, reflect a challenge of defining functionally distinct longline fleet categories for management and reporting purposes.

### **3. REVIEW OF FLEET CHARACTERISTICS: [COMMON OCEANS ABNJ TUNA PROJECT \(PHASE 2\)](#)**

Under Phase 2 of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, the initiative was expanded to include Mexico, Ecuador and Peru. The fleet characterizations presented in [SAC-16 INF-V](#) are summarized here and in Table 6 to support recommendations for developing a more formal and harmonized approach to fleet classification. As in Phase 1 of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project, substantial variability in how vessels are classified among countries was observed. Readers are referred to details in [SAC-16 INF-V](#) on domestic and international regulations and management and data sources for fisheries that target sharks or encounter them as bycatch, and to [SAC-16 INF-W](#) for information on identifying and mapping potential shark landing sites.

Like Phase 1, Phase 2 addressed a broad range of fisheries, including fisheries operating with gears other than longline and targeting species beyond tuna and tuna-like species. These broader efforts offer important context and are included here to provide continuity with previous classification work, including for longline fisheries. However, it is essential to underscore that the purpose of the present document is to respond to the EB-02 and EB-03 recommendations for the staff, in coordination with CPCs, to characterize the longline fleets targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the Convention Area.

#### **3.1. Mexico**

Vessels landing elasmobranchs in Mexico were classified by size as small (inshore), medium, or large. However, large vessels, defined as those with steel hulls, range from 27–44 m LOA, have one or more decks and one or more inboard engines, and specifically target sharks, no longer operate. Types of gears used are dependent on the target species and permits issued to the vessel. The small (inshore) vessels (n=2,188) were defined as primarily being made of fiberglass, <10.5 m LOA, equipped with outboard motors, have a fishing autonomy of up to three days, ≤3 t capacity, and typically operate within 18 km of the coast. These small vessels use pelagic longlines, bottom-set longlines or gillnets. In this fleet, fishers did not use preservation methods commonly used in other regions, only a wet blanket to cover the catch. The medium-sized vessels primarily consist of hulls made of steel or fiberglass, from 10–27 m LOA, inboard engine(s), ice as a preservation method, echo-sounder, one deck, have a fishing autonomy of at least 20 days and operate from about 27–37 km from the coast. Both the medium- and large-size vessels fish (or historically fished, in the case of large vessels) with pelagic longlines. Finally, although the large longline vessels are no longer in operation, they were used to fish for sharks and large pelagic species.

#### **3.2. Ecuador**

Vessels under the Ecuadorian flag were broadly divided into two groups, ‘industrial’ and ‘artisanal’ fleets with industrial vessels further separated into three categories based on their Net Register Tonnage (NRT) as: small-scale (0–≤100), medium-scale (>100–≤500) and large-scale (>500). The industrial fleet (n=609 vessels) comprises the tuna purse-seine fleet, the longline fleet for large pelagic species, the coastal purse-seine fleet for small pelagic fish, the Multipurpose<sup>7</sup> fleet or “polyvalent fleet” for hake and shallow-water

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<sup>7</sup> Multipurpose fleets are those vessels with trawling gear that catch shrimp and hake, but at certain times of the year they change their fishing gear to longline or purse seine nets.

shrimp, the hake fleet, the shrimp trawl fleet or "pomadera" (noting this fleet is no longer in operation), the eel fleet, and the longline fleet for small teleost species.

The artisanal fleet (n=7,250 vessels), defined as vessels <18 m LOA, with or without a full deck and without mechanical gear, was also classified into three categories: Class I (<8 m LOA), Class II (<12 m LOA and <15 t of fish per trip) and Class III (<18 m LOA and <30 t of fish per trip) that typically operate more than 8 nm offshore and may use motherships, but in the latter case, artisanal vessels operating on motherships are registered under a different category (supporting the small-scale industrial fleet). The artisanal fleet primarily uses longlines and gillnets and target species include large pelagic species (sharks, tunas, dorado and billfish), small coastal teleost and elasmobranch species and shrimps, many of which are caught seasonally.

Small artisanal vessels are constructed of fiberglass, wood or a combination of materials with an LOA of 4–14 m. These vessels fish independently, i.e., without the assistance of motherships, are restricted to fishing closer to shore as these vessels preserve the catch on ice rather than through a refrigeration system and their trip duration is typically 1–5 days. They lack navigation systems and space for carrying provisions and safety equipment. Fishing gear consists of longlines, gillnets and handlines with gear set at the surface, midwater or on the bottom to target coastal and large pelagic species, shrimp and demersal species.

Motherships tow up to ten small fiberglass boats to offshore fishing areas and back to the landing port. Prior to August 2024, two categories of motherships were recognized, 1) artisanal and 2) small-scale industrial. However, since October 2024, the artisanal mothership fleet was recategorized into the small-scale industrial mothership fleet. Motherships primarily use ice as the catch preservation method, while a few have onboard refrigeration systems. The length of these vessels is typically 20–30 m and the fishing autonomy is up to 40 days. The target species include large pelagic fishes such as tuna and billfish, and sharks are caught incidentally as bycatch. During the fishing season for dorado, trips may last 15–25 days.

Another fleet within Ecuador's maritime territory operates in the Galápagos insular region, where, according to the Galápagos National Park (PNG), there are currently around 350 registered vessels, of which 60% are made of fiberglass (categorized as small artisanal vessels). The remaining vessels generally have greater autonomy, with a length of ≤18 m (categorized as artisanal vessels operating with motherships, i.e., "mother artisanal"). All these vessels are dedicated to fishing for large pelagic teleost species, as shark landings are prohibited due to exclusive regulations in Galápagos. The main landing ports in the Galápagos insular region are Baltra, Baquerizo Moreno, Puerto Ayora, and Puerto Villamil.

### 3.3. Peru

According to the Fisheries Administration of Perú (PRODUCE) the vessels are categorized into two groups (1) artisanal or small-scale fishing vessels and (2) large-scale fishing vessels. The Research administration (IMARPE) classify the artisanal vessels into four types: "zapato" (n=699), (2) "chalana" (n=2,670), (3) "bote" (n=8,852) and (4) "lancha" (n=5,627). These vessels are required to hold a valid fishing permit for landing elasmobranchs and other large pelagic species in Peru. Gear types include longline, purse-seine, gillnet, handline and trawl net. Elasmobranchs are either targeted or caught as bycatch.

## 4. LONGLINE CLASSIFICATIONS UNDER A PROPOSED SHARK SAMPLING PROGRAM ([SAC-15-10](#))

Most recently, [SAC-15-10](#) on, "*Development of options for a shark data collection program for IATTC fisheries: lessons and opportunities*" presented in 2024, defined two main categories of longline vessels as "industrial longline" and "small-scale coastal," following work by Andraka et al. (2013), Martínez-Ortiz et al. (2015) and the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I Projects (e.g., [SAC-07-06b\(ii\)](#), [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#), [SAC-11-13](#)). These definitions are reiterated here and in Table 7 to support the development of recommendations for characterizing and classifying longline fisheries in the EPO.

#### **4.1. Industrial longline vessels**

“Large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels” (LSTLFVs) are defined in Resolution [C-11-05](#) as longline vessels >24 m LOA and being included on the IATTC LSTLFV Record as being authorized to fish for tuna and tuna-like species. However, some large longline vessels may predominantly target or catch billfish and sharks as opposed to tuna, and as such may not be licensed domestically as tuna vessels. Therefore, large longline vessels that generally operate long distances from the coast have been collectively referred to as “Industrial longline vessels” ( [SAC-15-10](#)).

#### **4.2. Small-scale coastal fisheries**

“Small-scale coastal fisheries” were recognized in [SAC-15-10](#) as diverse in size and target species and included fishing areas within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of coastal nations as well as oceanic-artisanal fleets that extend beyond EEZs into waters a great distance from the coast. These longline fisheries were further divided into three subcategories based on vessel size and/or range of operation: “artisanal” vessels, “mediana” vessels and “avanzada” vessels (the last two under the category of “Domestic commercial longline vessels”).

##### **4.2.1. “Artisanal vessels (pangas)”**

The “artisanal vessels” were referred to as “pangas” and defined as outboard-powered vessels generally <12 m LOA.

##### **4.2.2. “Domestic commercial longline vessels”**

“Domestic commercial longline vessels” were described as vessels <20 m LOA for which licenses are typically issued by the respective fishing authority of a coastal nation. In some regions, these were considered ‘industrial’ vessels based on national criteria, although this designation was not consistent across regions. These domestic commercial longline vessels consisted of two categories: “Mediana and Avanzada”.

##### **4.2.2.1 “Mediana or medium-range vessels”**

The medium-range vessels (called “mediana” vessels) within the category of domestic commercial longline vessels were defined as those operating within 40 nm or more of the coast in some countries and licensed by the respective fishing authority of a coastal nation.

##### **4.2.2.2. “Avanzada or advanced-range vessels”**

The advanced-range vessels (called “avanzada” vessels) within the category of domestic commercial longline vessels were defined as those operating from 40–100+ nm from the coast and licensed by the respective fishing authority of a coastal nation.

### **5. LONGLINE CLASSIFICATIONS RELATED TO ELECTRONIC MONITORING SYSTEMS**

The IATTC staff recommendations, and associated discussions at workshops, pertaining to the scope of an Electronic Monitoring System (EMS) in the EPO include two categories of longline vessels (1) those ≥12 m in length and (2) motherships of longline vessels <12 m in length ([EMS-02-02](#), [SAC-14 INF-H](#), [SAC-15 INF-Q](#)). Minimum standards for the use of EMS in IATTC fisheries—including longline fisheries—were adopted at the 102<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the IATTC in 2024 (Resolution [C-24-09](#)). This Resolution, although voluntary in nature, includes examples of camera locations aboard three different size categories of longline vessels: “small-sized vessels (<20 m LOA)”, to encompass medium- or advanced-range vessels and motherships of longline vessels <12 m LOA (pangas); “medium-sized vessels (20–24 m LOA)”, to encompass motherships or advanced-range vessels, and “large-sized vessels (>24 m LOA)”, to encompass large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (Table 1). Note that currently, data derived from EMS is not permitted to be used to satisfy existing IATTC data requirements, including data submission and observer requirements ([C-24-09](#)). The

IATTC [pilot project](#) for testing EMS on longline vessels<sup>8</sup> did not address the feasibility of adding cameras to different sized longline vessels because all four vessels cooperating in the project shared similarity in size (40.5–53.6 m LOA) and fishing operation. Additional efforts are ongoing in the region by, for example, the Nature Conservancy, INCOPECA, and the longline sector to pilot EM equipment in smaller longline vessels ([SFP, 2024](#)).

## 6. LONGLINE CLASSIFICATIONS UNDER ECOLOGICAL RISK ASSESSMENTS (PSA AND EASI-FISH)

A metadata review on data available for the “industrial longline fishery” in the EPO ([SAC-08-07b](#)) and a preliminary ecological risk assessment conducted for this fishery ([SAC-08-07d](#)) were presented at the IATTC’s 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee held in 2017. These two documents specifically describe the difficulties with defining the longline fisheries operating in the EPO, based on the work conducted under the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I Project ([SAC-07-06b\(ii\)](#)), which identified a variety of vessel sizes, gear configurations, fishing operations, fishing areas and target species. Both documents ([SAC-08-07b](#) and [SAC-08-07d](#)) focused on longline vessels >20 m LOA—because of two IATTC Resolutions that define sizes of longline vessels (i.e., [C-11-05](#): vessels >24 m LOA and [C-19-08](#): vessels >20 m LOA)—and refer to these vessels as “large-scale tuna longline fishing vessels (LSTLFVs)” to maintain some consistency with definitions and terminology in [C-11-05](#) for large longline vessels. They also acknowledge the importance of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I Project to collect data for the small-sized “artisanal” vessels to enable their inclusion of these important fleets in future ecological risk assessments to assess the cumulative impacts of all longline fisheries in the EPO.

## 7. LONGLINE CLASSIFICATIONS TO DEVELOP BHRPS BASED ON VESSEL CHARACTERISTICS

In 2024, the IATTC staff developed a workplan towards the adoption of Best Handling and Release Practices (BHRPs) for vulnerable species groups (sharks, rays, seabirds, sea turtles, marine mammals) in IATTC fisheries ([EB-02-03](#)). Additionally, BHRP guidelines for sharks in IATTC fisheries were provided in 2024 ([SAC-15-11](#)), and these guidelines were updated in 2025 ([SAC-16-10](#)). Although longline fisheries are addressed in the documents and include recommendations such as leaving sharks in the water, removing trailing gear and minimizing handling stress to improve post-release survival, the tool and handling recommendations are different for vessels with high and low freeboard (i.e., the distance between the vessel’s deck and the sea surface). This distinction of freeboard height was also adopted in Annex 3 of Resolution [C-25-08](#) where freeboard heights over 2m might require additional tools and have different BHRP recommendations for bringing animals onboard due to the assumption that most fishers in smaller-scale coastal fisheries remove hooks from sharks and other vulnerable species to retain their gear. Consequently, many handling guidelines must focus on how animals are brought onboard for gear removal whereby freeboard height dictates the guidance and tool requirements, and vessel LOA is not always the most useful predictor for BHRP guidelines. Similar distinctions have also been taken into consideration while developing BHRPs for other vulnerable taxa, such as sea turtles ([EB-03-05](#)) or seabirds ([EB-03-06](#)). These guidelines and the updated shark BHRP guidelines ([SAC-16-10](#)) have revised the definition of what constitutes high freeboard to higher than one meter from the sea surface since this is the height at which fishers can manually reach the surface and bring animals onboard for gear removal. Defining and classifying longline fisheries is therefore important when considering BHRP guidelines as vessel characteristics (e.g., freeboard) and fishing operations dictate the options and type of bycatch mitigation technique(s) and tools applicable to each category of vessels.

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<sup>8</sup> European Union grant agreement under the EMFAF, project number 839795 “IATTC-Electronic Monitoring (EM) of longline vessel activities in the Eastern Pacific Ocean”

## 8. PROCESS UNDERTAKEN TO PRODUCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEFINING FLEET CHARACTERISTICS

To develop recommendations for characterizing and classifying longline fleets targeting tuna and tuna-like species in the EPO Convention Area, the IATTC staff followed the four stages outlined in the Summary section: (1) reviewing the existing situation, (2) preparing preliminary categories, (3) refining these categories based on expert feedback, and (4) developing recommendations.

As part of Stage 1, staff reviewed previous work and available resources describing various longline fleet classifications, components and characteristics for both industrial and coastal fleets. This included reviewing active Resolutions; the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Projects (Phases 1 and 2); electronic monitoring (EM) classifications used in pilot projects, workshops, and adopted in Resolution [C-24-09](#); ERA and EASI-Fish vulnerability assessments ([SAC-08-07b](#), [SAC-08-07d](#)); and the development of BHRP guidelines for IATTC fisheries (Sections 2–7).

Drawing on this review and on discussions of document [SAC-16-09](#) at EB-03 and SAC-16, staff revised the three preliminary categories in SAC-16-09 and expanded them into five preliminary categories. This revision responded to EB-03's request for *“more precise evaluations of individual aspects of each fleet and the different segments exclusively of the longline fleets targeting species under the Commission's mandate.”* The resulting categories were defined using general operational attributes—such as vessel autonomy (time at sea), fishing areas and technologies used, target species, vessel size and design, and preservation and storage capabilities (see Section 9).

Following this, the draft document was shared with CPCs and, through them, technical experts (Memorandum Ref.: 0074-410), in line with EBWG recommendations, to solicit input and gather additional regional information to further refine the proposed categories. Feedback received through this process was subsequently incorporated into the document prior to its presentation at EB-04 in 2026.

## 9. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEFINING FLEET CHARACTERISTICS

The information presented in this document highlights some common elements that can support the classification and definition of longline fleets in the IATTC Convention Area and in relevant Resolutions and technical documents. The recommended preliminary fleet categories provide standardized definitions—particularly for smaller-scale longline vessels—to help CPCs determine which vessels fall under specific requirements, such as data-reporting obligations (e.g., Resolution [C-03-05](#)) and best handling and release guidelines (e.g., Resolutions [C-19-02](#) and [C-25-08](#)). Establishing consistent classifications will also improve estimates of total removals of species under the Commission's purview and strengthen the planning and implementation of research activities (e.g., development of BHRPs). Accordingly, the IATTC staff proposes the following recommended fleet categories (also see Table 8) as a foundation for formalizing longline vessels definitions:

**“Large-scale longline”** these vessels primarily consist of vessels from distant-water nations, and in general, may be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: long durations – capacity to operate far from the coast (see ‘Fishing area’) and stay at sea from several months to over a year; and
- b. Length: longline vessels with a registered length commonly >30 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel-inboard engine(s); and
- d. Electronic equipment: sophisticated fish-finding and navigational electronics (e.g., acoustic doppler current profilers, SONAR, echo-sounders); and
- e. Deck equipment: mechanical – hydraulic spool, winches, and/or line shooters to deploy and recover line and associated gear; and

- f. Preservation method: advanced freezing capabilities (i.e., a refrigeration system<sup>9</sup> to preserve fish at ultra-low temperatures for extended time periods); and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally >2,500 hooks per set; and
- h. Target species: tunas, billfishes and some shark species; typically does not change seasonally; and
- i. Transshipment of catch may occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- j. Fishing area: due to its characteristics, particularly its autonomy, the vessel generally operates far from the territory of its Flag State or home port, and at a considerable distance from the coast, primarily on the high seas, beyond the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). However, the vessel may also fish in the EPO within areas under national jurisdiction under a license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement; and
- k. Market: catch is commonly utilized domestically and at times may be exported

**“Advanced medium-scale longline”** these vessels may generally be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: capable of long durations – capacity to stay at sea for several weeks or months; commonly >25 days but generally < 90 days; and
- b. Length: longline vessels with a registered length commonly 20–30 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel-inboard engine(s); and
- d. Electronic equipment: may have sophisticated fish-finding and navigational electronics (e.g., acoustic doppler current profilers, SONAR, echo-sounders); and
- e. Deck equipment: mechanical – hydraulic spool, winches, and/or line shooters to deploy and recover line and associated gear; and
- f. Preservation method: may have advanced freezing capacity (i.e., a refrigeration system<sup>9</sup> to preserve fish at ultra-low temperatures for extended time periods); and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally 1,000–2,500 hooks per set; and
- h. Mothership<sup>10</sup>: the principal vessel may operate as a mothership towing up to 10 boats to and from the fishing grounds; and
- i. Target species: tunas, billfishes, dorado and some shark species; typically does not change seasonally; and
- j. Transshipment of catch may occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)<sup>11</sup>); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels can fish at a considerable distance from the coast, including outside EEZs, but generally operate within EEZs either of their own flag State or in another EEZ, other than that of its flag State, under license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement; and
- l. Market: catch is commonly utilized domestically and at times may be exported

**“Medium-scale longline”** these vessels may generally be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: moderate durations at sea, commonly <25 days; and
- b. Length: in general, longline vessels with a registered length commonly >10 m–20 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel-inboard engines; and
- d. Electronic equipment: some sophisticated fish-finding and navigational electronics (e.g., GPS, radar, echo-sounder); and

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<sup>9</sup> Any mechanized system for freezing, cooling and maintaining the temperature of the catch. Including, but not limited to, icemakers, refrigerated seawater, flooded brine, spray brine, and blast freezers.

<sup>10</sup> “Mothership” is defined as a longline fishing vessel that tows up to 10 small-scale coastal (‘artisanal’) longline vessels (fiber-glass skiffs or pangas) to distant fishing areas, and whose purpose is to fish, supply water, fuel, food, bait and other fishing inputs and in turn store the fish caught by the ‘artisanal’ fishing vessels in their holds.

<sup>11</sup> Noting C-22-23 states, “For the purposes of this Resolution, “Large-scale tuna fishing vessels” are defined as all vessels fishing beyond areas of national jurisdiction or beyond each CPC-controlled areas and targeting tuna or tuna-like species.”

- e. Deck equipment: may be mechanical or manual – hydraulic spool or hand-deployed and recovered line; and
- f. Preservation method: commonly use ice either carried from port or made aboard at sea; and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally 500–2,000 hooks per set; and
- h. Mothership<sup>10</sup>: the principal vessel may operate as a mothership towing up to 10 boats to and from the fishing grounds; and
- i. Target species: tunas, billfishes, some sharks, dorado, and other large pelagic fishes; target species may change depending on the season and market conditions; and
- j. Transshipment of the catch does not occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels can fish at a considerable distance from the coast, including outside EEZs, but generally operate within EEZs either of their own flag State or in another EEZ under license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement; and
- l. Market: domestic and export markets

**“Small-scale commercial longline”** Although these vessels account for a limited amount of the total catch in the Antigua Convention Area, reporting data on catch and effort for species under the purview of the Commission will facilitate improvements to IATTC’s estimates of total removals. It is important to note that these vessels may use other gear types in addition to longline, depending on season and market conditions. In general, these vessels may generally be defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: short durations at sea; commonly <5 days; and
- b. Length: in general, longline vessels with a registered length commonly <10–12 m; and
- c. Propulsion: powered by diesel- or gasoline-inboard engines; and
- d. Electronic equipment: some vessels are equipped with basic electronics (e.g., VHF radio, GPS, echo-sounder, etc.); and
- e. Deck equipment: manual – may haul by hand into baskets or tubs or use a hand-cranked line drum; and
- f. Preservation method: ice; no refrigeration systems; and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally ≤1,000; and
- h. Mothership<sup>10</sup>: not applicable
- i. Target species: mixed or multi-species fisheries, switching target species from dorado to tunas, billfishes, sharks depending on the season and market conditions; and
- j. Transshipment of the catch does not occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels primarily fish within the areas under national jurisdiction of their own flag State or of another EPO coastal State; and
- l. Market: commonly used for domestic markets and on occasion export markets

**“Small-scale coastal longline”** these vessels are often referred to as “*artisanal*”, which operate primarily within areas close to the coast, are generally associated with subsistence or local markets, although catches may also enter export supply chains. They account for an even smaller amount of the total catch in the Antigua Convention Area, but improved reporting of their catch and effort for species under the Commission’s purview is useful for strengthening IATTC estimates of total removals. The importance of documenting these fisheries has been explicitly recognized through regional data-collection efforts under two IATTC-led projects financed by the FAO Common Oceans Program—the *Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction* (ABNJ) Tuna Projects, Phases 1 and 2. These vessels may use other gear types in addition to longline, depending on season and market conditions. In general, these vessels may be best defined by the following characteristics:

- a. Vessel autonomy: short durations at sea; commonly <5 days; duration increases if vessel is used as a “catcher” vessel aboard a mothership; and
- b. Length: in general, vessels with a registered length <10 m; and

- c. Propulsion: powered by gasoline outboard engines; and
- d. Electronic equipment: may have some basic electronics (e.g., VHF radio, GPS, etc.); and
- e. Deck equipment: manual – likely hauls by hand into baskets or tubs or use a hand-cranked line drum; and
- f. Preservation method: ice; no refrigeration systems; and
- g. Number of hooks deployed: generally  $\leq 1,000$ ; and
- h. Mothership<sup>10</sup>: vessel may operate as a “catcher” vessel in coordination with a mothership; and
- i. Target species: mixed or multi-species fisheries, switching target species from dorado to tunas, billfishes, sharks depending on the time of the year, seasonal prices and other market conditions; and
- j. Transshipment of the catch does not occur (see Resolution [C-22-03](#)); and
- k. Fishing area: vessels primarily fish within the areas under national jurisdiction of their own flag State or of another EPO coastal State, unless operating as a catcher vessel in coordination with a mothership and may then operate outside the EEZ; and
- l. Market: commonly used for local consumption; may be sold in domestic markets; catcher-vessel product may be exported

### 9.1. Application and implications of the classification system

Because the proposed categories describe broad operational characteristics, some vessels may exhibit attributes that span more than one category. In such cases, classification should be based on the vessel’s predominant mode of operation, considering the combination of characteristics most representative of its typical fishing pattern (e.g., autonomy, fishing area, preservation method). When overlap remains, CPCs may apply a hierarchical approach that prioritizes operational capacity and fishing behavior over individual physical attributes such as length or electronics. Clear documentation of the rationale for assigning a vessel to a given category will help maintain consistency across CPCs and support transparency in the application of IATTC Resolutions and data-reporting requirements.

It is important to note that certain Resolutions or Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs) that either have already been adopted (e.g., C-03-05 on data provision) or may be considered for adoption by the Commission in the future (e.g., potential resolutions dedicated to EMS or BHRPs), may also need to be updated and/or adapted to suit the needs of the different categories of vessels, if the categories are formally adopted. For example, due to spatial constraints on small-scale vessels, potential CMMs such as those that might involve mandatory observer coverage, bycatch mitigation techniques and/or BHRPs may inherently be expected to have different requirements than those of the medium- or large-scale longline vessel categories. To illustrate, consider a hypothetical resolution that makes observer coverage compulsory for all vessel sizes, but onboard human observers may not be feasible on the small-scale coastal vessels. Therefore, EMS may be considered in place of a human observer, but the number and placement of cameras that may be required on these small vessels are likely to be different from those of the larger vessels. Similarly, certain Bycatch Release Devices specified in BHRPs (e.g., long-handed de-hookers) may not be recommended or required on smaller vessels compared to larger vessels. This type of information would be relevant for resolutions that require vessel owners or operators to carry onboard safe handling tools, to ensure best handling practices and/or to use certain hook types such as large circle hooks (e.g., [C-19-04](#) on sea turtles). Scientific recommendations and adoption of BHRPs will benefit from formal definitions of longline vessel categories. For example, to better inform BHRPs like those defined in Resolutions C-19-04 on sea turtles and [C-25-08](#) on sharks (Appendix 3). These types of considerations would need to be addressed in Resolutions that include defined categories of vessels. Adoption of broad categories and classifications of longline vessels will facilitate improvements in, for example, data provision related to [C-03-05](#), development of recommendations for BHRP guidelines, evaluation of EMS on vessels with different characteristics and EASI-Fish assessments as a technical support tool.

Furthermore, the Workshops on Data Improvement include an objective for obtaining feedback on the mechanisms for data reporting. These options include developing templates with required data fields, fixed field Excel forms, and in the long term, apps for data reporting (see [SAC-16 INF-O](#)). Such options are aimed at helping CPCs report and submit relevant data to the IATTC for estimates of total removals and scientific analyses.

## **10. CONSIDERATIONS**

Building on the proposed classification framework and its application, the following considerations highlight key implementation challenges and practical constraints for CPCs and the Commission.

For small-scale commercial and small-scale coastal fleets, where capacity for systematic data collection may be limited, CPCs shall endeavor to provide information to the extent possible in accordance with Resolution [C-03-05](#) and its associated technical [specifications](#). Developing in situ data collection programs that account for vessel variability should also be encouraged, in line with the ABNJ-1 and 2 projects conducted by the staff in recent years in collaboration with CPCs.

In some CPCs, small-scale longline fisheries are characterized by multi-species and dynamic fishing strategies, where target species, fishing areas, and gear configurations may vary in response to seasonality, resource availability, and market conditions. Accordingly, classification should account for national fleet characteristics and the operational diversity of fishing practices.

Given that vessel registries in some CPCs may be incomplete or undergoing consolidation, classification systems should allow for phased implementation and, where necessary, the use of indirect estimation methods to support fleet characterization.

The feasibility of data collection systems, and in particular, electronic monitoring systems, on small-scale longline vessels should be assessed with consideration of technical, economic, and operational constraints. Voluntary pilot initiatives, tailored to local fishing strategies, may provide a practical pathway for gradual implementation.

To support effective application of the classification system, flexibility should be built into its design and implementation. This includes allowing CPCs to adapt management and operational procedures based on available data, local knowledge, and institutional capacity, particularly where monitoring and fleet characterization remain limited.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

The proposed classification of longline vessels provides a structured yet flexible framework to better reflect the diversity of operational characteristics across fleets in the EPO. While some overlap between categories is inevitable, the use of predominant operational criteria and transparent documentation can support consistent application across CPCs.

Importantly, the adoption of these categories has implications beyond classification itself, including for data reporting, observer coverage, electronic monitoring systems, and the development of bycatch mitigation measures (i.e., best handling and release practices). Ensuring that these measures are appropriately tailored to different vessel types will be essential for their effectiveness and feasibility.

A phased and flexible implementation approach—grounded in existing capacities, local knowledge, and iterative improvement, will allow CPCs to progressively align with the classification system while strengthening data provision and scientific support. In this way, the proposed framework can contribute to more coherent, transparent, and effective management of longline fisheries operating within the IATTC Convention Area.

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**TABLE 1.** [IATTC active Resolutions](#) involving longline (LL) vessels and/or referencing “*artisanal*” or “*industrial*” vessels operating within the IATTC Convention Area in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO). LOA=length overall; EBWG=Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group; SAC=Scientific Advisory Committee; LSTLFV=Large-Scale Tuna Longline Fishing Vessels; ToR=Terms of Reference; EMS=Electronic Monitoring Systems.

**TABLA 1.** [Resoluciones activas de la CIAT](#) que involucran a buques palangreros (LL) y/o hacen referencia a buques “*artesanales*” o “*industriales*” que operan dentro del Área de la Convención de la CIAT en el Océano Pacífico oriental (OPO). LOA = eslora total; GTECI = Grupo de Trabajo sobre Ecosistema y Captura Incidental; CCA = Comité Científico Asesor; LSTLFV = buques atuneros palangreros grandes; TdR = Términos de Referencia; SME = sistemas de monitoreo electrónico.

<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Reference to longline vessels in IATTC active resolutions</b>
<a href="#">C-03-05</a>	Data provision	Applicable to all vessel sizes; refers to catch data from “ <i>artisanal</i> ” vessels but with no corresponding definition
<a href="#">C-04-05</a>	Consolidated Resolution on Bycatch	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; states longline vessels must carry onboard equipment to ensure safe release of sea turtles (e.g., de-hookers, line cutters); refers to the “ <i>artisanal</i> ” fishery but with no corresponding definition
<a href="#">C-04-07</a>	Mitigating the impact of tuna fishing on sea turtles	No reference to longline, but includes reference to “small-scale artisanal fisheries” as high priority research in coastal areas with no corresponding definition of artisanal
<a href="#">C-11-02</a>	Seabirds	Mitigation recommendations and safe handling practices on longline vessels; implementation of recommendation for longline vessels $\geq 24$ m LOA while technical specifications on smaller longline vessels should be considered by the EBWG, SAC and IATTC staff
<a href="#">C-11-03</a>	Prohibiting fishing on anchored buoys	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; mentions longline vessels are prohibited from deploying gear within 1 nm of an anchored buoy
<a href="#">C-11-05</a>	List of Longline vessels >24 m LOA	>24 m LOA
<a href="#">C-15-04</a>	Conservation of mobulid rays	No explicit reference to longline, but excludes “small-scale and artisanal fisheries” defined as “<1.99 net tonnage by the 1969 International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships”
<a href="#">C-15-07</a>	Data confidentiality	Catch, effort and length frequency data grouped by 5x5xmonth for longline vessels in the public domain provided that the catch of no individual vessel, company, or person can be identified within a time/area stratum.
<a href="#">C-18-06</a>	Regional Vessel Register	States that “ <i>flag CPC’s shall ensure that all their fishing vessels (except for recreational fishing vessels) authorized to fish in the Convention Area that are at least 100 gross tons (GT) or 100 gross registered tons (GRT) in size have an IMO or LR number issued. Effective 1 January 2020, flag CPCs shall ensure that all their motorized onboard fishing vessels (except for recreational fishing vessels) of less than 100 GT or 100 GRT down to a size limit of 12 meters in length overall (LOA) or registered length, authorized to fish in the high seas of the Convention Area have an IMO or LR number issued. In assessing compliance with this requirement, the Commission shall take into account extraordinary circumstances in which a vessel owner is not able to obtain an IMO or LR number despite following the appropriate procedures</i> ”
<a href="#">C-18-07</a>	Observer safety at sea	Refers to longline vessels with observer programs; >20 m per C-19-08
<a href="#">C-19-02</a>	IUU fishing	Refers to LSTLFV’s (i.e., vessels >24 m LOA)
<a href="#">C-19-04</a>	Sea turtles	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; discusses safe handling tools and release practices, mitigation measures
<a href="#">C-19-08</a>	Observers on LL vessels	>20 m LOA
<a href="#">C-21-02</a>	ToRs for workshops on EMS	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; refers to longline vessels in the preamble regarding development of minimum standards of EMS on longline vessels and as a tool for monitoring and improving data collection
<a href="#">C-21-03</a>	Definitions of implementation of an EMS for tuna fisheries	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; refers to longline vessels in the preamble regarding development of minimum standards of EMS on longline vessels and as a tool for monitoring and improving data collection
<a href="#">C-22-02</a>	Process for improved compliance of resolutions	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; refers to possible non-compliance with IATTC resolutions from longline observer programs; Annex 1 includes obligations in resolutions involving longline vessels

<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Reference to longline vessels in IATTC active resolutions</b>
<a href="#">C-22-03</a>	Transshipment	LSTLFV's defined as all vessels fishing beyond areas of national jurisdiction or beyond each CPC-controlled areas and targeting tuna or tuna-like species; applicable for vessels on the LSTLFV list of authorized vessels according to C-11-05 (>24 m) LOA
<a href="#">C-23-08</a>	Silky sharks	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; refers to multispecies longline fleets both 'artisanal' and 'industrial'; mentions the following definition for the purposes of the resolution, <i>"surface longlines are those in which the majority of hooks fish at depths shallower than 100 meters and target species other than swordfish."</i>
<a href="#">C-23-09</a>	Dolphinfish (dorado)	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; refers to 'artisanal' and 'industrial' longline with no definitions of these terms
<a href="#">C-23-11</a>	VMS	All vessel sizes (does not explicitly mention longline vessel size)
<a href="#">C-24-04</a>	South Pacific Albacore	LSTLFV's >24m
<a href="#">C-24-07</a>	Regional Vessel Register	Amends C-18-06. States that <i>"flag CPC's shall ensure that all their fishing vessels (except for recreational fishing vessels) authorized to fish in the Convention Area that are at least 100 gross tons (GT) or 100 gross registered tons (GRT) in size have an IMO or LR number issued. Effective 1 January 2020, flag CPCs shall ensure that all their motorized inboard fishing vessels (except for recreational fishing vessels) of less than 100 GT or 100 GRT down to a size limit of 12 meters in length overall (LOA) or registered length, authorized to fish in the high seas of the Convention Area have an IMO or LR number issued. In assessing compliance with this requirement, the Commission shall take into account extraordinary circumstances in which a vessel owner is not able to obtain an IMO or LR number despite following the appropriate procedures"</i>
<a href="#">C-24-09</a>	EMS interim standards	Small: <20 m LOA Medium: 20–24 m LOA Large: >24 m LOA
<a href="#">C-25-01</a>	Tuna Conservation in the EPO	>24 m LOA, fishing for yellowfin, bigeye and skipjack tuna
<a href="#">C-25-05</a>	Working Group on Dorado	Mentions "artisanal" and "industrial" fishing industries with no definition of these terms
<a href="#">C-25-08</a>	Sharks	No explicit reference to longline vessel size; refers to safe handling and release practices (amends and replaces C-24-05)
<a href="#">C-25-09</a>	Silky sharks	Mentions multi-species longline fleets, both artisanal and industrial, in the coastal countries. Vessels <12 m LOA using manually operated fishing gear (i.e., without mechanical or hydraulic winches) and that do not deliver to motherships at any time during the fishing trip are excluded from the application of this resolution

**TABLE 2.** Definitions of fisheries (a) targeting sharks and (b) catching sharks as bycatch, reproduced from descriptions of these fisheries in [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#) under the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project Phase 1 that was produced using information prior to 2015 and included herein for consideration in informing proposed categories of longline vessels. Reference to other gear types is included for completeness but not considered in the proposed longline categories described in Table 8. LOA=length overall; EPO=eastern Pacific Ocean.

**TABLA 2.** Definiciones de las pesquerías (a) dirigidas a los tiburones y (b) que capturan tiburones de forma incidental, reproducida a partir de las descripciones de estas pesquerías en el documento [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#) en el marco de la Fase 1 del Proyecto ABNJ Atún de Océanos Comunes, que se elaboró utilizando información anterior a 2015 e incluida aquí para su consideración al informar las categorías propuestas de buques palangreros. Se incluyen referencias a otros tipos de artes en aras de la exhaustividad, pero no se tienen en cuenta en las categorías de palangreros propuestas que se describen en la Tabla 8. LOA=eslora total; OPO=Océano Pacífico oriental.

(a)

<b>Fishery</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Longline fisheries of EPO coastal States for large pelagic species	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Target large pelagic species (sharks, tunas, billfishes, dorado);</li> <li>2. Vessels are commonly &lt;20 m LOA;</li> <li>3. Fishing autonomy &lt;25 days at sea;</li> <li>4. Lack frozen storage (preservation method is ice);</li> <li>5. Commonly change target species depending on seasonal availability and market</li> </ol>
Multi-species and multi-gear artisanal <sup>1</sup> fisheries of EPO coastal States	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small artisanal vessels that target elasmobranchs in coastal areas;</li> <li>2. Vessels are commonly &lt;15 m LOA;</li> <li>3. Vessels generally have outboard motors;</li> <li>4. Highly seasonal fishery that catches juvenile and/or neonate sharks and rays;</li> <li>5. May use different gear types during a single trip (e.g., longlines, gillnets);</li> <li>6. Range of trip duration: 1 day (gillnets) to 3 days (longline);</li> <li>7. Motherships may extend duration to nearly 3 weeks, increasing range to offshore (Martinez et al. 2015)</li> </ol>
Distant-water shark longline fisheries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Vessels coming from outside the EPO;</li> <li>2. May operate in Exclusive Economic Zones of EPO coastal States, under license agreements;</li> <li>3. Catch composition predominately sharks (primarily silky sharks);</li> <li>4. Use landing ports in Central America;</li> <li>5. Vessel LOA range of 23–264 m with fish hold volumes of 60–1,938 m<sup>3</sup></li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup>Artisanal fisheries are typically small-scale coastal fisheries for subsistence or for local markets, generally using traditional fishing techniques and small vessels (<15 m LOA). For practical reasons, the definition used in SAC-07-06b(iii) is fisheries involving vessels “less than 1.99 net tonnage, as defined by the 1969 international Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships” (IATTC Resolution C-15-04)

(b)

<b>Fishery</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Tuna purse-seine fisheries of EPO coastal and distant-water fleets	Sharks taken as bycatch in three set types: tuna associated with dolphins (DEL sets), tuna associated with floating objects (OBJ sets) and unassociated tuna schools (NOA sets)
Tuna-billfish longline fisheries of EPO distant-water fleets	High-seas longline fleets, primarily from Asia that target tuna and billfish; sharks and other large pelagic species are caught as bycatch
Multi-species and multi-gear fisheries of EPO coastal States	Sharks and rays (primarily coastal species) are caught as bycatch in multi-gear small-scale artisanal fisheries targeting a multi-species complex (porgy or snapper, corvina, grouper, shrimp etc.) in coastal waters

**TABLE 3.** Number and classification of vessels that fish for sharks in the EPO, by flag, category, and gear. T/B: Target/bycatch; LOA: length overall; NRT: net registered tonnage; GN: gillnet; HX: handline; LL: Longline; PS: purse-seine; TX: trawl net (noting gears other than longline are included in this table for completeness, although the categories proposed in the document herein are focused solely on longline to address the recommendations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> meetings of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG)). This table is reproduced from [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#), under the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project: Phase 1 in Central America, that used information prior to 2015, to facilitate a process for characterizing longline vessels to provide clarity on terminology in IATTC Resolutions.

**TABLA 3.** Número y clasificación de embarcaciones que pescan tiburones en el OPO, por pabellón, categoría y arte. O/CI: objetivo/captura incidental; LOA: eslora total; TRN: tonelaje de registro neto; GN: red agallera; HX: línea de mano; LL: palangre; PS: red de cerco; TX: red de arrastre (en esta tabla se incluyen artes distintos del palangre en aras de la exhaustividad, aunque las categorías propuestas en el presente documento se centran únicamente en el palangre para atender las recomendaciones de la 2ª y 3ª reunión del Grupo de Trabajo sobre Ecosistema y Captura Incidental (GTECI)). Esta tabla se reproduce de [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#), en el marco del Proyecto ABNJ Atún de Océanos Comunes: Fase 1 en Centroamérica, que utilizó información anterior a 2015, para facilitar un proceso de caracterización de los buques palangreros que aporte claridad sobre la terminología en las resoluciones de la CIAT.

Category	Definition	Number	Gear	Date	T/B
<b>Belize</b>					
Industrial	Belize vessels that fish in the EPO	11	LL	2014	T/B
<b>Costa Rica</b>					
Small-scale/artisanal	<3 nautical miles (nm) from coast	6100	GN/LL	2010	B
Medium-scale	Autonomy <25 d, <40 nm from coast	350	LL	2015	T/B
Advanced	Autonomy >25 d, >40 nm from coast	93	LL	2015	B
Semi-industrial	Trawl net fishery	360	TX	2015	B
Foreign	See section 2.2 (noting that this fleet has not landed in over a decade)				
<b>El Salvador</b>					
Industrial	>10 m LOA	3*	LL	2010	T
Artisanal	<10 m LOA	8300	GN/LL	2010	T/B
<b>Guatemala</b>					
Large-scale commercial	30.1-150 NRT	3	PS	2015	B
Medium-scale commercial	2-30 NRT	17		2015	T
Small-scale commercial	1-1.99 NRT	5	LL	2015	T/B
Small-scale artisanal	0.46-0.99 NRT; <10 m LOA, fiberglass hull, outboard motor, autonomy < 4 d	4860	GN/LL	2010	T/B
<b>Nicaragua</b>					
Industrial	>15 m LOA, mechanically operated fishing gear, electronic fish-finding and location equipment	50†	LL/TX	2015	T
Artisanal	<15 m LOA, fiberglass hull, outboard motor	4300	GN/LL	2010	T/B
<b>Panama</b>					
High-seas 1	≥100 NRT	344	83 LL; 261 PS/TX	2015	T/B
High-seas 2	10-99 NRT				
Coastal 1	<10 NRT; limited autonomy	3554	GN/LL/LX	2010	T/B
Coastal 2	Rowed vessels				
International	Panamanian and foreign vessels that fish outside the 200 nm EEZ	82	26 PS/56 LL	2015	T

\*Inactive since 2011; †8 of the 50 industrial vessels are <15 m LOA

**TABLE 4.** Contemporary characteristics of Costa Rica’s small-, medium-, and advanced-scale commercial fleets, that deploy longline gear, following the completion of the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project: Phase 1 (post-2015) included herein for consideration in informing proposed categories of longline vessels.

**TABLA 4.** Características actuales de las flotas comerciales de pequeña escala, mediana escala y escala avanzada de Costa Rica que utilizan artes de palangre, tras la finalización del Proyecto ABNJ Atún de Océanos Comunes: Fase 1 (posterior a 2015), incluidas en el presente documento para su consideración al informar las categorías propuestas de buques palangreros.

Characteristic	Small-scale	Medium-scale	Advanced-scale	Reference
Vessel length (m)		7.3–21.2	10.7–23.8	(Pacheco Chaves <i>et al.</i> 2020)
Vessel beam (m)		2.4–5.6	3.1–7.6	
Vessel depth (m)		0.9–3.5	1.4–4.5	
Vessel gross tonnage		4.4–49.9	10.6–113.3	
Vessel net tonnage		0.8–24.5	3.8–71.1	
Length of mainline (nm)		6–50	9–70	
No. of hooks		200–1800	280–2800	
Length of leaderline (fathoms: fth)		0.5–6.6	0.3–6.0	
Length of the branchline (fth)		0.3–10.2	0.3–12	
Distance between hooks (fth)		3–55	5–55	
No. hooks between floats		2–5	2–5	
No. of floats between flags		1–16	8–15	
No. of radio buoys		0–9	3–14	
No. of crew members		2–5	3–7	
fuel/trip (gallons)		7–10000	21–19000	
No. of sets		1–32	1–50	
Fishing days		1–49	1–88	

Characteristic	Small-scale	Medium-scale	Advanced-scale	Reference
Vessel size	'small' boats	'larger', motorized vessels		(Incopescas 2022)
Fishing area	≤3 nm from Costa Rica's territorial waters	≤40 nm from shore	>40 nm from shore	
Fishing methods	manual or traditional methods		mechanical devices	
Market	catches for local consumption or sale in domestic markets			

Characteristic	Small-scale	Medium-scale	Advanced-scale	Reference
Fishing area	≤3 nm from coast	≤40 nm from coast	beyond 40 nm from coast	(Alfaro-Rodríguez 2022)
Main fishing gears	includes bottom longline	includes bottom and surface longline	surface and mid-water longline	
Vessel length (m)	4–14	7–20	9–28	
Target species	demersal and coastal fishes and crustaceans	demersal, coastal, large pelagic fishes	large pelagic fishes	

Characteristic	Small-scale	Medium-scale	Advanced-scale	Reference
Fishing area	≤3 nm from coast			(Zamora-García <i>et al.</i> 2022)
Motor type	outboard			
Autonomy	daily trips	<25 days		
Technology	'Limited'		'Greater'	
Storage capacity (fish hold)	'Limited'	'Greater'		
Preservation method		Icing or freezing	Icing or freezing	
Gear	handlines, gillnets, bottom longlines, surface longlines	surface longlines with or without wire leaders; different hook types and sizes	surface longlines with or without wire leaders; different hook types and sizes	
Target species		large pelagics i.e. sharks, tunas, billfish, dorado	large pelagics i.e. sharks, tunas, billfish, dorado	

**TABLE 5.** Summary of characteristics applicable to Panamanian longline vessels as defined by recent laws ([Ley No. 204](#), 2021) and Executive Decrees ([Decreto ejecutivo No. 13](#), 2023), [Decreto ejecutivo No. 14](#) 2023), [Decreto Ejecutivo No. 126](#), 2017) passed following the ABNJ Tuna I Project (i.e., post 2015).

**TABLA 5.** Resumen de las características aplicables a los buques palangreros panameños según lo definido por las leyes recientes ([Ley No. 204](#), 2021) y los decretos ejecutivos ([Decreto ejecutivo No. 13](#), 2023), [Decreto ejecutivo No. 14](#) 2023), [Decreto Ejecutivo No. 126](#), 2017) posterior al Proyecto ABNJ Atún I (es decir, después de 2015).

Law No. 204. Article 40: Establishes categories of commercial fishing	Description of the different categories	Executive Decree No. 13: Characteristics of vessels by category; and its amendment (Decree No. 14)	Executive Decree 126: Operational characteristics of longline fishing in jurisdictional waters
<b>Small-scale or artisanal fishing</b>	<p><b>Art. 52.</b> This refers to fishing activities carried out on board vessels propelled by oars or outboard motors, whether or not equipped with navigation instruments. Mechanized fishing techniques are not used.</p> <p><b>Art. 52.</b> This shall only be carried out in inland waters and areas under Panamanian sovereignty and jurisdiction.</p>	<p><b>Art. 36.</b> Vessels with a length not exceeding 12 meters and a draft not exceeding 1.5 meters. Propelled by oars or outboard motor(s) not exceeding 150 horsepower. Do not use mechanized techniques such as hydraulic winches or capstans.</p> <p><b>Art. 166:</b> Transshipments shall not be permitted in waters under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Republic of Panama to small-scale or artisanal, medium-scale, and large-scale Panamanian vessels.</p>	<p>Applies to longline fishing in the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama.</p> <p><b>Art. 15.</b> ...Surface longline with a maximum of one thousand (1,000) circular hooks, without swivels, and a minimum size of 14/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 16.</b> ...Horizontal bottom longline with a maximum of 450 circular hooks without swivels, with a minimum size of 13/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 17.</b> ...Vertical bottom longline, operated with a manual reel, may only use four (4) manual reels, with a vertical line with a maximum of fifteen (15) circular hooks, without swivels, with a minimum size of 10/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 14.</b> ... surface or bottom longline fishing may not use steel or other metal cables in the mainline and may only use one (1) mechanical reel or winch per vessel.</p>
<b>Medium-scale fishing</b>	<p><b>Art. 54.</b> This refers to fishing activities carried out on board vessels powered by internal or outboard motors, equipped with navigation instruments, mechanized fishing gear, and possibly refrigeration systems.</p>	<p><b>Art. 39.</b> Vessels with a hull volume and hold volume of less than 28 cubic meters. Powered by an internal or outboard motor. Equipped with navigation instruments, using mechanized fishing techniques and possibly equipped with refrigeration systems.</p>	<p>Applies to longline fishing in the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama...</p> <p><b>Art. 15.</b> ...Surface longline with a maximum of one thousand (1,000) circular hooks, without swivels, and a minimum size of 14/0.</p>

Law No. 204. Article 40: Establishes categories of commercial fishing	Description of the different categories	Executive Decree No. 13: Characteristics of vessels by category; and its amendment (Decree No. 14)	Executive Decree 126: Operational characteristics of longline fishing in jurisdictional waters
	<p><b>Art. 55.</b> This shall only be carried out in areas under Panamanian sovereignty or jurisdiction.</p>	<p><b>Art. 141*.</b> All medium-scale and large-scale vessels engaged in international service that carry out fishing activities, fishing-related activities, and related activities are required to install and carry on board a functional VMS...</p> <p><b>Art. 166:</b> ... Transshipments in waters under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Republic of Panama shall not be permitted for small-scale or artisanal, medium-scale, and large-scale Panamanian vessels.</p>	<p><b>Art. 16.</b> ...Horizontal bottom longline with a maximum of 450 circular hooks without swivels, with a minimum size of 13/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 17.</b> ...Vertical bottom longline, operated with a manual reel, may only use four (4) manual reels, with a vertical line with a maximum of fifteen (15) circular hooks, without swivels, with a minimum size of 10/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 14.</b> ... Surface or bottom longline fishing may not use steel or other metal cables in the line and may only use one (1) mechanical reel or winch per vessel.</p>
<b>Large-scale fishing</b>	<p><b>Art. 56.</b> This refers to fishing activities carried out on board vessels powered by internal combustion engines, equipped with navigation instruments, mechanized fishing gear, and refrigeration systems. These vessels have greater autonomy and storage capacity than medium-scale vessels.</p> <p><b>Art. 57.</b> This shall only be carried out in areas under Panamanian sovereignty or jurisdiction.</p>	<p><b>Art. 42.</b> Vessels with a hull volume and hold volume equal to or greater than 28 cubic meters. Powered by an internal combustion engine. Equipped with navigation instruments, mechanized fishing gear, and/or refrigeration systems.</p> <p><b>Art. 141*.</b> All medium-scale and large-scale vessels engaged in international service that carry out fishing activities, fishing-related activities, and related activities are required to install and carry on board a functional VMS...</p> <p><b>Art. 166:</b> ... Transshipments shall not be permitted in waters under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the Republic of Panama to small-scale or artisanal, medium-scale, and large-scale Panamanian vessels.</p>	<p>Applies to longline fishing in the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama...</p> <p><b>Art. 15.</b> ...Surface longline with a maximum of one thousand (1,000) circular hooks, without swivels, and a minimum size of 14/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 16.</b> ...Horizontal bottom longline with a maximum of 450 circular hooks without swivels, with a minimum size of 13/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 17.</b> ...Vertical bottom longlines, operated with a manual reel, may only use four (4) manual reels, with a vertical line with a maximum of fifteen (15) circular hooks, without swivels, with a minimum size of 10/0.</p> <p><b>Art. 14.</b> ... Surface or bottom longline fishing may not use steel or other metal cables in the line and may only use one (1) mechanical reel or winch per vessel.</p>

Law No. 204. Article 40: Establishes categories of commercial fishing	Description of the different categories	Executive Decree No. 13: Characteristics of vessels by category; and its amendment (Decree No. 14)	Executive Decree 126: Operational characteristics of longline fishing in jurisdictional waters
<p><b>International service fishing</b></p>	<p><b>Art. 58.</b> This refers to fishing activities carried out on board international service vessels that are registered under the national flag and operate in waters outside national jurisdiction.</p> <p><b>Art. 59.</b> This shall only be carried out in areas beyond Panamanian jurisdiction.</p>	<p><b>Art. 44.</b> Vessels engaged in fishing activities in waters outside the jurisdiction of the Republic of Panama.</p> <p><b>Art. 141*.</b> All medium-scale and large-scale vessels engaged in international service that carry out fishing activities, fishing-related activities, and related activities are required to install and carry on board a functional VMS...</p> <p><b>Art. 164:</b> Transshipment by donor vessels: Fishing vessels engaged in international service that use purse seines or longlines as fishing gear may carry out transshipments as donors, provided that the Authority authorizes the operation.</p>	<p>This Decree does not include international service fishing.</p>

**TABLE 6.** Classification of vessels identified under the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna Project Phase 2 for Mexico, Ecuador and Peru; LOA = length overall; NRT = Net registered tonnage; Number: number of vessels authorized; Gear: registered fishing gear, GN = gillnet, LL = drift longline or bottom set line, PS = purse seine, HAR = harpoon, LP = pole and line, TX = trawl, HX = handline, OTR = other, AG = all gears; Year: year of information verification; T = target catch / B = incidental catch (bycatch). Gears other than longline are included in this table for completeness, although the categories proposed in the document herein are focused solely on longline to address the recommendations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> meetings of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group (EBWG). Reproduced from [SAC-16 INF-V](#), to facilitate discussions for developing a process for characterizing longline fleets to provide clarity on terminology in IATTC Resolutions.

**TABLA 6.** Clasificación de los buques identificados en el marco de la Fase 2 del Proyecto ABNJ Atún de Océanos Comunes para México, Ecuador y Perú; LOA = eslora total; Número: número de buques autorizados; TRN: tonelaje de registro neto; Arte: arte de pesca registrado, GN = red agallera, LL = palangre de deriva o palangre de fondo, PS = red de cerco, HAR = arpón, LP = caña, TX = red arrastre, HX = línea de mano, OTR = otros, TA = todas las artes; Año: año de verificación de la información; O = captura objetivo / CI = captura incidental. En esta tabla se incluyen artes distintos del palangre en aras de la exhaustividad, aunque las categorías propuestas en el presente documento se centran únicamente en el palangre para atender las recomendaciones de la 2<sup>a</sup> y 3<sup>a</sup> reunión del Grupo de Trabajo sobre Ecosistema y Captura Incidental (GTECI). Reproducida del documento [SAC-16 INF-V](#), para facilitar las discusiones para el desarrollo de un proceso de caracterización de las flotas palangreras para proporcionar claridad sobre la terminología en las resoluciones de la CIAT.

Category	Definition	Number <sup>1</sup>	Gear	Year <sup>2</sup>	T/B
<b>Mexico</b>					
small or inshore vessels	Primarily made of fiberglass, LOA ≤10.5m; outboard motors; autonomy of 3 days; 3t capacity; typically operates within 18km from the coast	2,188	GN/LL	2022	T/B
medium-sized vessels	Hulls made of steel or fiberglass; LOA range 10–27m, stationary engines, deck; autonomy of >20 days; refrigeration system; echo-sounder; typically operates 27–37km from the coast	132	LL	2022	T/B
large vessels	steel hulls, LOA range 27–44m; one or more decks; one or more inboard engines; echo-sounder; fishing autonomy >20 days; typically operates about 92km from the coast	6	LL	2021	T
<b>Ecuador</b>					
<b>Artisanal fleet</b>					
small-scale artisanal	Fiberglass ≤14m LOA	7,250	GN/LL/PS/HAR/LP/HX/OTR	2023	B
<b>Industrial fleet</b>					
artisanal with mothership	Longline boat ≤18m LOA	86	LL	2023	B
small-scale industrial	0–≤100 NRT	397	134 LL/15 PS (tuna PS) /248 PS (coastal PS fleet for small pelagics)	2023	B
medium-scale industrial	>100–≤500 NRT	112	9 LL/95 PS (tuna PS) /8 PS (coastal PS fleet for small pelagics)	2023	B
large-scale industrial	>500 NRT	14	14 PS (tuna PS)	2023	B
<b>Peru</b>					
<b>Artisanal<sup>5</sup></b>	≤ 32.6 m <sup>3</sup> well capacity and ≤ 15 m of LOA, with a predominance of manual labor.	52	PS/AG	2001	B
Zapato <sup>6</sup>	Wooden vessels with no deck; pronounced bow, square, sloping stern, no keel capacity between 0.2 and 1.0t, but typically 0.5t. Rowboats propelled by oars	699	GN/HX	2017	B
Chalana <sup>5</sup>	Wooden vessels, without deck, with reduced dimensions, ≤6 m LOA, with well capacity of 0.2–2.0 t but predominantly 0.5–1.0 t. The stern is square and the bow pointed. Propelled by mid-engine, outboard motor and others by oar.	2,670	GN/HX	2017	B
Bote <sup>5</sup>	Vessels constructed mainly of wood, but also of fiberglass. They vary in size, with total or partial cover, well capacity of 1.0–8.0 t but mostly 2.0–5.0 t. Propelled by a central engine or outboard motor, although in the Piura Region there are also those propelled by sail or both.	8,852	GN/LL/ HX	2017	T/B
Lancha <sup>5</sup>	Vessels constructed mostly of wood, and to a lesser extent of metal, fiberglass and ferrocement. They have a full or partial deck, and a deck bridge. They are mid-engine or outboard powered, with well capacity 5–32 t, but mostly in the 6–20 t range. The design and location of the engine varies according to the gear used.	5,627	PS/TX/ LL/HX	2017	T/B
<b>Small scale<sup>4</sup></b>	≤ 32.6 m <sup>3</sup> well capacity and ≤15m LOA, inboard engines, deck with refrigeration system (ice); echo-sounder.	89	LL/PS/TX/AG	2001	B
<b>Large scale<sup>4</sup></b>	> 32.6 m <sup>3</sup> well capacity, inboard engines, deck with refrigeration system; echo-sounder.	8	LL/PS/TX	2001	B

<sup>4</sup> Defined by the year in which the 3 categories were established (Supreme Decree N° 012-2001-PE).<sup>5</sup> PRODUCE; <sup>6</sup> IMARPE

**TABLE 7.** Longline fleet classifications defined in [SAC-15-10](#), “Development of Options for a Shark Data Collection Program for IATTC Fisheries: Lessons and Opportunities.” NA: not applicable; LOA: length overall; Res: Resolution; m: meters; nm: nautical miles.

**TABLA 7.** Clasificaciones de flotas palangreras definidas en el documento [SAC-15-10](#) titulado “Opciones para el desarrollo de un programa de recolección de datos de tiburones para las pesquerías de la CIAT: lecciones y oportunidades”. NA: no aplicable; LOA: eslora total; Res: Resolución; m: metros; mn: millas náuticas.

Category	Sub-category	Definition	Reference
Industrial longline vessels	NA	Vessels >24 m LOA	"Large-scale tuna longline fishing vessel (LSTLFV)" Res. <a href="#">C-11-05</a>
Small-scale coastal fisheries	Artisanal (pangas)	Vessels <12 m LOA	<a href="#">SAC-07-06b(ii)</a> ; <a href="#">SAC-11-13</a>
	Mediana (medium range)	Vessels operating within 40 nm of coast	<a href="#">SAC-07-06b(ii)</a> ; <a href="#">SAC-11-13</a>
	Avanzada (advanced range)	Vessels operating within 40–100 nm of coast	<a href="#">SAC-07-06b(ii)</a> ; <a href="#">SAC-11-13</a>

**TABLE 8.** Proposed classification categories for longline vessels targeting tunas and billfishes under the Commission’s purview in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO), developed with a focus on fishing activity characteristics (how, what, where, when, and why). Categories were developed in response to recommendations from the 2nd and 3rd meetings of the Ecosystem and Bycatch Working Group. Due to substantial variation in how “artisanal” fisheries are defined across CPCs, as highlighted by the Common Oceans ABNJ Tuna I and II Projects ([SAC-07-06b\(ii\)](#); [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#); [SAC-16 INF-V](#)), the characteristic descriptions for each category **are general in nature and may include exceptions**. The purpose of establishing these categories is to guide research planning, support management measures and decision-making, and improve clarity for CPCs, data providers, scientists, policy makers, and other stakeholders when considering relevant Resolutions and IATTC documents. Development of clear and practical reporting categories—particularly for smaller-scale longline vessels—given the current lack of formal definitions for “small-scale” and “artisanal” vessels in IATTC Resolutions, will improve data collection and estimates of total removals (e.g., under Resolution C-03-05). The two small-scale categories may deploy other gears, in addition to longline, depending on season and market conditions. EEZ: Exclusive Economic Zone; NA: Not Applicable.

**TABLA 8.** Categorías de clasificación propuestas para los buques palangreros que pescan atunes y peces picudos bajo competencia de la Comisión en el Océano Pacífico oriental (OPO), elaboradas centrándose en las características de la actividad pesquera (cómo, qué, dónde, cuándo y por qué). Las categorías se elaboraron en respuesta a las recomendaciones de la 2ª y 3ª reunión del Grupo de Trabajo sobre Ecosistema y Captura Incidental. Debido a la considerable variación en la definición de pesquerías “artesanales” entre los CPC, tal y como se destaca en los proyectos ABNJ Atún I y II de Océanos Comunes ([SAC-07-06b\(ii\)](#), [SAC-07-06b\(iii\)](#); [SAC-16 INF-V](#)), las descripciones de las características de cada categoría **son de carácter general y pueden incluir excepciones**. El objetivo de establecer estas categorías es orientar la planificación de la investigación, respaldar las medidas de ordenación y la toma de decisiones, y mejorar la claridad para los CPC, los proveedores de datos, los científicos, los responsables políticos y otras partes interesadas a la hora de examinar las resoluciones y los documentos pertinentes de la CIAT. El desarrollo de categorías de notificación claras y prácticas, en particular para las embarcaciones palangreras de pequeña escala, dada la actual falta de definiciones formales de embarcaciones “de pequeña escala” y “artesanales” en las resoluciones de la CIAT, mejorará la recolección de datos y las estimaciones de las extracciones totales (por ejemplo, en virtud de la resolución C-03-05). Las dos categorías de pequeña escala pueden utilizar otros artes de pesca además del palangre, en función de la estación y las condiciones del mercado. ZEE: Zona Económica Exclusiva; N/A: No aplicable.

Fishing activity	Characteristic	Large-scale longline	Advanced medium-scale longline	Medium-scale longline	Small-scale commercial longline	Small-scale coastal longline
How	Autonomy	<b>Long durations</b> , capacity to stay at sea from several months to more than a year	Capable of <b>long durations</b> , capacity to stay at sea for several weeks or months; commonly >25 days but generally < 90 days	<b>Moderate durations</b> at sea; commonly <25 days	<b>Short durations</b> at sea, commonly <5 days	<b>Short durations</b> at sea, commonly <5 days. Duration increases if used as a catcher vessel aboard a mothership
	Length (m)	<b>Large vessels:</b> Commonly >30 m	<b>Large vessels:</b> Commonly 20–30 m	<b>Medium vessels:</b> Commonly >10–20 m	<b>Small vessels:</b> Commonly <10–12 m	<b>Small boats:</b> Commonly <10 m
	Propulsion	<b>Diesel-inboard power</b>	<b>Diesel-inboard power</b>	<b>Diesel-inboard power</b>	<b>Diesel- or gasoline-inboard power</b>	<b>Gasoline outboard engine(s)</b>
	Electronic equipment	<b>Fish finding and navigational electronics</b> (e.g., acoustic doppler current profilers, SONAR, echo-sounder)	May have <b>fish finding and navigational electronics</b> (e.g., acoustic doppler current profilers, SONAR, echo-sounder )	Some <b>fish finding and navigational electronics</b> (e.g., GPS, radar, echo-sounder)	<b>Basic electronics</b> (e.g., VHF radio, GPS, echo-sounder, etc.)	May have some <b>basic electronics</b> (e.g., VHF radio, GPS, etc.)
	Deck equipment	<b>Mechanical:</b> Hydraulic spool, winches, and/or line shooters to deploy and recover line and associated gear	<b>Mechanical:</b> Hydraulic spool, winches, and/or line shooters to deploy and recover line and associated gear	<b>Mechanical or manual:</b> hydraulic spool or hand-deployed and recovered line	<b>Manual:</b> May haul by hand into baskets or tubs, or use a hand-cranked line drum	<b>Manual:</b> Likely hauls by hand into baskets or tubs, or use a hand-cranked line drum
	Preservation method	<b>Advanced freezing capabilities</b> (i.e., refrigeration systems for preserving catch at ultra-low temperatures (-50°C to -60°C) for extended time periods	May have <b>advanced freezing capacity</b> (i.e., refrigeration systems to preserve fish at ultra-low temperatures for extended time periods)	Commonly use <b>ice</b> either carried from port or made aboard at sea	<b>Ice;</b> no refrigeration systems	<b>Ice;</b> no refrigeration systems

Fishing activity	Characteristic	Large-scale longline	Advanced medium-scale longline	Medium-scale longline	Small-scale commercial longline	Small-scale coastal longline
	Number of hooks	Generally, >2,500	Generally, 1,000–2,500	Generally, 500–2,000	Generally, ≤1,000	Generally, ≤1,000
	Mothership <sup>12</sup>	NA	Vessel may operate as a mothership	Vessel may operate as a mothership	NA	May operate as a “catcher” vessel aboard a mothership
	Transshipment	May occur (see <a href="#">C-22-03</a> )	May occur (see: <a href="#">C-22-03</a> )	Does not occur (see <a href="#">C-22-03</a> )	Does not occur (see <a href="#">C-22-03</a> )	Does not occur (see <a href="#">C-22-03</a> )
What	Target species	Tunas, billfishes some shark species	Tunas, billfishes, dorado, some shark species	Tunas, billfishes, sharks, dorado, and other large pelagic fishes	Mixed or multi-species fisheries, switching target species from dorado to tunas, billfishes, sharks	Mixed or multi-species fisheries, switching target species from dorado to tunas, billfish and sharks
Where	Fishing area	Due to its characteristics, particularly its autonomy, the vessel generally operates far from the territory of its Flag State or home port, and at a considerable distance from the coast, primarily on the high seas, beyond the 200-mile EEZs. However, the vessel may also fish in the EPO within areas under national jurisdiction under license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement	Vessels can fish at a considerable distance from the coast including outside EEZs, but generally operate within EEZs either of their own flag State or in another EEZ, other than that of their flag State, under license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement	Vessels can fish at a considerable distance from the coast, including outside EEZs, but generally operate within EEZs either of their own flag State or under license granted by the coastal State or within the framework of a fishing agreement	Vessels primarily fish within the areas under national jurisdiction of their own flag State or of another EPO coastal State	Vessels primarily fish within the areas under national jurisdiction of their own flag State or of another EPO coastal State, unless operating as a catcher vessel in coordination with a mothership and may then operate outside the EEZ
When	Seasonality component	Target species typically does not change seasonally	Target species typically does not change seasonally	Target species may change depending on the season and market conditions	Target species may change depending on the season and market conditions	Target species may change depending on the season and market conditions
Why	Market	Domestic and export markets	Domestic and export markets	Domestic and export markets	Commonly for domestic markets; occasionally export markets	Commonly used for local consumption; may be sold in domestic markets; catcher-vessel product may be exported

<sup>12</sup> “Mothership” is defined as a longline fishing vessel that tows up to 10 small-scale coastal (‘artisanal’) longline vessels (fiber-glass skiffs or pangas) to distant fishing areas, and whose purpose is to fish, supply water, fuel, food, bait and other fishing inputs and in turn store the fish caught by the ‘artisanal’ fishing vessels in their holds.