



Guayaquil July 20, 2022

Dear IATTC delegates:

Industry representatives and shipowners from TUNACONS Foundation present this letter to request additional support from CPCs for measures that will promote tuna conservation at the Commission meeting that begins on August 1, 2022.

***Management measures for tropical tunas***

- We request the IATTC members to take actions so that the scientific staff, in coordination with the CPCs, adequately implement the Pilot Study of Individual Vessel Limits during July-December 2022.
- We also call for continued improvement of risk assessments analysis for tropical tunas, and further work to improve skipjack tuna stock assessment, especially using recently collected tagging data.
- Complete a management plan to eliminate excess capacity in the Convention area.

***Precautionary and comprehensive harvest strategies***

- We request the Commission to continue to effectively support the work plan for the evaluation of management strategies led by the staff, through the securing of economic resources that will allow it to successfully complete all the programmed activities until 2024. Many fisheries already certified or in the process of being assessed depend on it.

***Best FAD management practices***

- We urge the IATTC to incorporate a clear mandate regarding a gradual but effective process for the transition of fleets towards the exclusive use of biodegradable FADs within the next 3 years.
- We also ask that the amount of material used to make the hanging structure of the FAD and the non-biodegradable components of these devices be reduced.
- To reduce the risk of marine megafauna becoming entangled in the nets of traditional FADs when they drift into the sea or when they end up stranded, we request that the use of materials without mesh be promoted for the construction of FADs and thus eliminate possible entanglements.
- Develop and implement science-based FAD set limits that are consistent with management objectives for tropical tunas, and also establish science-based limits to reduce the total number of FADs deployed per vessel taking into account differences with FAD prototypes that are biodegradable.
- Develop FAD collection programs that incorporate incentives to participate.

***Observer coverage in industrial tuna fisheries***

- Gradually reach 100% observer coverage (human or electronic) on all purse seiners and longliners over 20m by 2025, beginning with a requirement of at least 20% observer coverage by 2023 for all longliners and purse seiners of less than 363 tonnes capacity.

- Support the Work Plan for the electronic monitoring system, and the set of recommendations contained in Annex 1 of document SAC-13 INF-D, prepared by the scientific staff of the Commission.

### **Conservation of sharks and sea turtles**

- We request the IATTC to strengthen the finning resolution and to enforce it by requiring that all sharks be landed with their fins naturally attached to the body.
- In addition, that the Commission staff place special emphasis on improving the collection of data on the catch of CITES-listed species, such as hammerhead sharks and silky sharks, as well as other species that are caught by coastal longlines, and gillnets, as well as by deep-sea longline fisheries and small-scale purse-seine fisheries. This information is necessary to develop stock assessments and/or other indicators of the condition of the stocks, which allow better information on the management of the various shark species.
- Recently, a collaborative research project (BYC-11-01) between the IATTC and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, used the EASIFish approach as an alternative means to assess the state of vulnerability and simulate conservation and management measures that can mitigate the risks posed by fishing to the Critically Endangered population of the eastern Pacific leatherback. We support the conservation measures proposed in that study, which include the use of circle hooks, fish bait, and better handling and release practices, to decrease leatherback mortality, and call on member countries of the Commission that operate longliners, to adopt them as soon as possible.

To date, TUNACONS Foundation has carried out actions to achieve conservation results within the IATTC. Some examples are:

- Participation in a FAD recovery project to avoid negative impacts on the coastal areas of the Galapagos Marine Reserve.
- Support was given to the Government of Ecuador in the development of a National Tuna Action Plan to guide national actions in the short, medium and long term for efficient and sustainable management of the fishery;
- A project was carried out -in collaboration with the IATTC- to test materials and design prototypes of non-entangle biodegradable FADs (bioFADs). TUNACONS has replaced 20% of its traditional FADs with biodegradable and non-entanglement FADs
- The Government of Ecuador was advised to present a resolution proposal to adopt tropical tuna harvest control rules, which was formally adopted as Resolution C-16-02 by the IATTC in 2016.
- Cooperating with IATTC scientific staff to deliver additional data from the buoys on the FAD fishery, to improve the Tropical Tunas Stock Assessment work.
- 100% observer coverage was achieved for vessels that are part of TUNACONS, including both large-class and small-class vessels that are not required by law to do so;
- Participating companies have formally adopted, and are routinely enforcing, a protocol for the safe handling and release of bycatch;
- Participation in a manta ray tagging project to measure mortality levels after release.
- Cooperates with international organizations in the recycling of discarded nets to reduce marine pollution.
- Support for the creation of the Hermandad Marine Reserve.

**Guillermo Morán**  
Director of TUNACONS



**Pablo Guerrero**  
Director of Marine Conservation  
at WWF Ecuador