

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

**AD HOC WORKING GROUP TO STRENGTHEN THE DIALOGUE AMONG
SCIENTISTS, MANAGERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS ON MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY EVALUATION (MSE DIALOGUE WORKING GROUP, MSEDWG)**

4TH MEETING

La Jolla, California (USA, Hybrid)

5 June 2026

**CO-CHAIRS' REPORT OF THE 4TH MEETING OF
THE AD HOC MSE DIALOGUE WORKING GROUP (MSEDWG-04)**

1. Opening of the meeting

The Co-Chairs, Dr. Juan-Carlos Quiroz (Ecuador) and Ms. Shana Miller (USA), opened the meeting at 9:05 am Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) by thanking the Secretariat for organizing the meeting and welcoming the in-person and online participants. The participant list is included in **Annex 1**.

The Co-Chairs recalled the discussions at MSEDWG-03 in April 2026 and acknowledged the additional progress made in the interim by the Secretariat's Scientific Staff on the management strategy evaluation (MSE) for bigeye tuna, highlighting the staff's efforts to address the MSEDWG's requests for consideration of multistock subjects.

To set the goal for the day's meeting, the co-chairs referenced the current draft of the MSEDWG workplan, pertinent text from Resolution C-25-01, and a recommendation from the 2025 Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting, which state the intention to work toward adoption of a management procedure (MP) in 2026.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The Co-Chairs proposed a slight modification to the agenda to enable the Scientific Staff to combine the bigeye MSE and multistock presentations and to cover that item prior to a discussion on management objectives. Several members voiced their frustration with the late posting of meeting documents, emphasizing that it would make it difficult for participants to actively engage in the day's deliberations since there was not enough time to review the materials and discuss them with colleagues in advance. The Co-Chairs and Scientific Staff agreed that the delays in document posting were unfortunate and sincerely apologized for complicating participants' preparations for the meeting.

The Co-Chairs' revised agenda was approved, and the final agenda can be found in **Annex 2**.

3. Review and provide feedback on the updated Bigeye Tuna MSE with multistock considerations

The Co-Chairs introduced the Companion Guide to the EPO Bigeye Tuna MSE ([MSEDWG-04 INF-B](#)), which they developed in response to a request from MSEDWG-03. The Guide reviews why IATTC had decided to pursue MSE-tested MPs for tropical tunas, defines key terms, and outlines the main features of the bigeye MSE, including reference points, candidate harvest control rules (HCRs), and performance indicators.

The IATTC Scientific Staff presented options for future management of bigeye and the other tropical tunas, as well as the scientific basis for each option ([SAC-17-06 Pres](#)). They emphasized the developments since MSEDWG-03, notably the impact of the promising results of the 2026 bigeye assessment and the new analyses they conducted on yellowfin and skipjack. The staff's presented options are as follows:

1. **Extend the current measures in Resolution C-25-01 through 2027 and 2028 (Res. C-25-01, paragraph 1):** This option would continue to support the high-level objective of the Antigua Convention to maintain stocks at or above levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield (MSY). However, it would forgo potential fishing opportunities indicated by the current, more optimistic stock status and results of the risk analysis.
2. **Adopt a Management Procedure**
 - a. **Applies one of the three candidate HCRs identified in the bigeye tuna MSE:** This is like option one, except it does so in the context of an adopted management procedure. Application of any of the three candidate HCRs identified as meeting the proposed management objectives (i.e., F30-S20/staff-proposed, F35-S20, F35-S25) would provide a structured and tested pathway for management ([SAC-17-05](#)). However, progress toward the target fishing mortality would be gradual due to the 10-day stability restriction, with the objectives achieved over an extended period (approximately 20 years or more). Given the current healthy status of all three tropical tuna stocks, increased fishing opportunities could potentially be realized more rapidly, particularly for skipjack tuna.
 - b. **Applies one of the three candidate HCRs identified in the bigeye tuna MSE, adjusted to allow a more rapid trajectory toward the management objectives:** Similar to Option 2a, this approach would maintain the proposed management objectives while providing increased fishing opportunities at a faster rate than option 1 by relaxing the 10-day stability restriction in the first management cycle, consistent with the current stock status and low estimated risks of exceeding the reference points for the three stocks.
 - c. **For all four stocks:** Extend Option 2b to apply the same management procedure used for bigeye to the two yellowfin stocks and the skipjack stock. Like the current interim harvest strategy, the management procedure from the stock requiring the most restrictive management would determine the management action. This approach takes into consideration that bigeye may no longer be the species requiring the most restrictive management, but it uses knowledge acquired from the MSE process for bigeye while also providing increased fishing opportunities at a faster rate.
3. **Direct application of the interim harvest control rule (Resolution [C-23-06](#)):** This option would increase fishing pressure toward the target reference point, F_{MSY} . The staff does not recommend this option because application of the interim HCR would result in an abrupt and complete elimination of the purse-seine closure.

The group discussed the results and staff recommendations to better understand the options. The staff clarified that the 40-day closure period target for Options 2b and 2c was set to have a closure period that would have no more than a 20% chance of leading to a more than 10-day increase in the closure in the third management cycle based on the stock with the highest risk (i.e., currently southwest yellowfin).

The beneficial impact of the Individual Vessel Threshold (IVT) was emphasized repeatedly as a primary cause of the improved bigeye stock status and an essential part of the above options. Participants voiced concern that drastic reductions in the closure period might decrease the disincentive provided by the current IVT levels, which the staff acknowledged, even if reduced closure periods would lead to vessels hitting the thresholds faster.

4. Review and provide feedback on management objectives for bigeye tuna

The group reviewed the set of strawman management objectives for bigeye from [MSEDWG-02 \(MSEDWG-04 INF-A\)](#). Participants considered the objectives relative to the MSE results and noted some incongruities between the prior objectives and the current MSE analyses. The Co-Chairs edited the strawman to better reflect the current objectives assumed by the staff in the MSE, and after a detailed review, the participants asked that it be posted on the meeting webpage as a new working document ([MSEDWG-04-01](#)). Members stressed that they did not have a mandate to make any decisions on management objectives at MSEDWG-04, so the document remains a draft working document.

The USA questioned how management objectives might be affected by future changes, such as changes in observer coverage levels or increases in longline fishing, especially if vessels relocate from the western and central Pacific as restrictions tighten there. The European Union asked whether stock status objectives could be quantitatively evaluated for yellowfin and skipjack tunas; the Scientific Staff said that would be a longer term effort and could not be done by the 2026 annual meeting.

5. Review and provide feedback on the draft timeline and workplan for the bigeye tuna MSE

The Co-Chairs reviewed the upcoming meetings of the MSEDWG, including MSEDWG-05, to be held virtually on July 21-22, 2026 (2-6 pm PDT) and MSEDWG-06, to be held in a hybrid format on August 29, 2026 (afternoon CET). Since future work will be decided in part by deliberations at SAC-17 next week, the group did not revise the timeline and workplan from MSEDWG-03 and instead focused on identifying agenda items for MSEDWG-05. They agreed on the following list of priority topics, which will serve as the basis for the July agenda:

- Review updated MSE results, if applicable
- Finalize Management Objectives
- Discuss Monitoring and Control Measures for Management Procedure
- Exceptional Circumstances
- Management Procedure Review Process and Schedule
- Review Management Procedure Proposals from CPCs (if relevant)

A member asked about the timeline for adding longline catches to the MSE as a dynamic management output, and the Staff replied that it would depend on whether the group decided to prioritize that over additional MSE development for the other tropical tuna stocks.

6. Next Steps

The Co-Chairs referenced the report that they will give to SAC-17 next week and asked the group whether they would like to make a recommendation to the SAC. Participants agreed to the following text:

The MSEDWG recommends that the Scientific Advisory Committee at its 17th meeting consider the results of the bigeye tuna management strategy evaluation (MSE) with the scientific staff's supplementary multi-stock analyses, as well as the staff's recommended management options, including for adoption of management objectives and a management procedure.

The Co-Chairs committed to posting an annotated agenda with documents no later than two weeks prior to MSEDWG-05 in July. Due to the new concepts slated for discussion at that session (e.g., exceptional circumstances), any interested parties should reach out to the Secretariat scientists or Co-Chairs if they would like to learn more. Similarly, any members who would like to draft potential MP Resolution text for review and discussion at MSEDWG-05 should reach out to the Co-Chairs for a spot on the agenda.

7. Other Business

No topics were discussed under other business.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was closed at approximately 3:30 pm PDT, with the understanding that the Co-Chairs would draft and circulate a meeting report as soon as possible.

Annex 1**List of participants**

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4. Review and provide feedback on management objectives for bigeye tuna
5. Review and provide feedback on the draft timeline and workplan for the Bigeye Tuna MSE
6. Next steps
7. Other Business
8. Adjournment