

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION
WORKING GROUP ON ECOSYSTEMS AND BYCATCH

2ND MEETING
La Jolla, California (USA)
05-06 June 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE WORKING GROUP

The EBWG recommends that:

1. Sea Turtles

- 1.1. A second circle hook workshop be conducted that will fulfill the mandate of paragraph 3(d)(i) of Res. C-19-04.
- 1.2. Advice be provided by the workshop on the impacts of fishing operations on the form and structure (i.e., longevity and integrity) of circle hooks of various sizes and from different manufacturers.
- 1.3. The workshop include development of a third mitigation measure as described in Paragraph 3(d)(iii) of C-19-04 for small coastal multi-species vessel fleets as well as best handling and release practices for sea turtles.

1. Mobulid Rays

- 2.1. The use of sorting grids be considered on purse seine vessels to mitigate impacts to Mobulid rays.
- 2.2. Captain workshops include training on the use of sorting grids and encourage their voluntary use.
- 2.3. The Commission endorse the Best Handling and Release Practices (BHRP) guideline development workplan for rays, and sorting grids be included in handling and release guidelines in resolution C-15-04 Annex 1, point 5 as another alternative for the release of rays.

3. Climate Change and EcoCards Workplans

- 3.1. The SAC and the Commission consider the further development of the proposed Climate Change and EcoCards Workplans, and encourage that this work be done in collaboration with expertise from other tuna RFMOs.
- 3.2. Final workplan proposals be submitted to the Commission, along with proposed budgets.

2. Hammerhead Sharks

Considering the benefits of understanding the ecology and spatial population structure of target and bycatch species in various assessment efforts, including close-kin mark-recapture (CKMR) and conventional stock assessment, a conceptual model of life history, ecology, and spatial population structure be developed for three hammerhead sharks species *Sphyrnalewini*, *S. zygaena* and *S. mokarran* similar to the one described in Talwar et al. (2024; presentation EB-02 5.c.2) for silky shark.

4. Fleet Characteristics

The Staff, in coordination with the CPCs, develop and present to the Commission the 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.

5. Meeting Process

The SAC and Commission consider that, in the Rules of Procedure, a provision be added to the effect that, while appreciating the improvements introduced in the dynamics of the meetings of the SAC and related working groups, meeting documents and presentations should be made available through posting on the Commission web site at least 2 weeks before the start of the corresponding cycle of meetings, in both Spanish and English

6. Seabirds

The below described Seabird Action Plan (see Annex 1) be adopted, with the understanding that an intersessional meeting will be held prior to the third meeting of the EBWG.

7. Shark species list

- 8.1. For the purposes of Art VII, paragraph f) of the Antigua Convention, the preliminary list of 19 species of sharks presented by the IATTC Staff be adopted [see attached], understanding that this list is based upon species of interest due to their interactions and catchability associated with fisheries under IATTC management.
- 8.2. The SAC consider the inclusion in the list of:
 - the crocodile shark, *Pseudocarcharias kamohari*;
 - rays, manta rays and mobulas of interest.

Annex 1 Seabird Action Plan (with timeline)

2024:

1. IATTC Scientific Staff will conduct a seabird assessment for presentation at the EBWG in 2025, including but not limited to:
 - a. Comparison between C-11-02 and mitigation measures in other tRFMOs.
 - b. Update of [SAR-7-05b]: spatial distributions of seabird species in the IATTC Convention Area, including any geographic hotspots for these species, overlap with LL fishing effort, and conservation statuses
 - c. Overview of mitigation measures in use by CPCs in the IATTC Convention Area as required in paragraph 5 of C-11-02. This should account for all CPCs, including any that may have vessels fishing in areas where bycatch mitigation measures are not required.
 - d. Summary of observed and estimated seabird bycatch rates in the IATTC Convention Area, including geographic information where possible, noting that data are limited.

2025:

2. At the 2025 EBWG, the IATTC Scientific Staff will present the results of its assessment for discussion by CPCs.
3. Between EBWG 2025 and the 2025 IATTC plenary, interested CPCs will coordinate intersessionally on a draft proposal updating C-11-02.

Proposed sponsors will present the updated seabird proposal for adoption at the 103rd meeting of the IATTC in 2025.

Annex 2
List of shark species

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