

INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION

104th MEETING

Lisbon, Portugal

31 August – 4 September 2026

PROPOSAL IATTC-104 T-1

SUBMITTED BY THE UNITED STATES

**INTERIM MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE FOR TROPICAL TUNAS
(YELLOWFIN, BIGEYE, AND SKIPJACK) IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC
OCEAN FOR 2027-2032**

The Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), gathered in Lisbon, Portugal, on the occasion of its 104th Meeting;

Recalling its responsibility for the conservation and management of tunas and tuna-like species in the Convention Area, and for the formulation of recommendations to its Members and Cooperating Non-Members (CPCs) with regard to the conservation and management of these resources;

Further Recalling Resolutions C-16-02, C-23-06, and C-24-08 on harvest control rules for tropical tunas and to create the Ad Hoc Working Group to Strengthen the Dialogue Among Scientists, Managers and Other Stakeholders on Management Strategy Evaluation;

Noting that Resolution C-25-01 required the IATTC scientific staff to prioritize presenting a bigeye tuna harvest strategy for adoption by the Commission in 2026;

Emphasizing that the update assessment for bigeye tuna conducted in 2026 indicates that fishing mortality on juveniles has continued to decline following implementation of the Individual Vessel Threshold (IVT) and the corresponding support of the Integrated Port Sampling Program (IPSP);

Further Emphasizing that the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), at its 17th meeting, as well the IATTC Scientific Staff, recommended maintaining the IVT and the IPSP as a scientific data collection platform to support management of the tropical tuna fishery in the eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO);

Considering the SAC, at its 17th meeting, as well as the IATTC scientific staff, concluded that the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) results for bigeye tuna (SAC-17-05) show the management measures in Resolution C-25-01 to be effective;

Further considering that the SAC, at its 17th meeting, as well as the IATTC scientific staff, recommended reductions in management measures be implemented incrementally and within a Management Procedure framework.

Recognizing that although all tropical tuna stocks are assessed to be in healthy condition, yellowfin tuna is now the tropical stock that requires the strictest management;

Taking into account Article IV of the Antigua Convention calling upon members of the Commission to apply the precautionary approach, as described in the relevant provisions of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, as well as the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement, for the conservation, management and sustainable use of fish stocks covered by

the Convention;

Bearing in mind that Article 7.5.3 of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing indicates that regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) should determine stock-specific target and limit reference points, the action to be taken if reference points are approached or exceeded, and measures to be taken to ensure that limit reference points will not be exceeded,

Agrees:

1. An interim management procedure for two 3-year management periods (2027-2029 and 2030-2032), which includes the elements described in this Resolution, shall be adopted for purse seine fisheries which harvest tropical tuna in the Convention Area.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- a. Considering the overarching objective of ensuring the sustainability of tropical tuna and current fisheries supported by the stocks in the eastern Pacific Ocean, the following management objectives for each stock are established:
 - i. **Safety:** Maintain Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) above the Limit Reference Point, with a probability of at least 50% in each year over the long term (21 years or 7 management periods).
 - ii. **Status:** Maintain the stock in the green quadrant of the Kobe plot (i.e., SSB at or above SSB at Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and Fishing mortality (F) at or below F at MSY with greater than a 70% probability over the long term 21 years or 7 management periods).
 - iii. **Stability:** Any change in the purse seine closure between consecutive management periods should be no more than a 10-day increase or decrease, unless biomass is below the threshold, at which point 20-day maximum increases would be permitted.
 - iv. **Yield:** To the extent practicable, catch of yellowfin and skipjack tuna should be maximized at a sustainable level.
 - v. **Abundance:** Maintain average SSB of bigeye at or above the 2015- 2017 levels.
 - vi. **Effort:** Keep the purse seine fishery open as long as possible.

REFERENCE POINTS

- b. For the purposes of this Resolution, the following definitions apply:
 - i. A limit reference point (LRP) is a conservation reference point based on level of dynamic spawning biomass ratio (dSBR)¹ that should be avoided because going beyond it could endanger the sustainability of the stock.
 - ii. S_{control} is defined as the threshold for dSBR below which fishing mortality decreases in response to stock depletion.
 - iii. A target reference point is a management objective based on a level of spawning

¹ dSBR is defined as the ratio of current spawning biomass to dynamic unfished spawning biomass.

biomass (S_{TARGET}) or a fishing mortality rate (F_{TARGET}) that should be achieved and maintained.

- c. For the purpose of the tropical tuna interim management procedure, the following reference points are established for all three tropical tunas (yellowfin, bigeye, and skipjack):
 - i. Target reference point (TRP; F_{TARGET}) = F35%, which is the fishing mortality (F) level that results in the stock producing 35% dSBR (S_{TARGET}).
 - ii. Threshold reference point (ThRP; S_{control}) = 25% dSBR (0.25dSBR) which is the threshold for dSBR, below which fishing mortality decreases in response to further stock depletion.
 - iii. Limit reference point (LRP) = 20% dSBR (0.2dSBR).

ACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF RISK

- d. The risk of breaching the Limit Reference Point based on the most current estimate of dSBR shall be no greater than 50%.

MONITORING

- e. The IPSP, as described in SAC-16-05, shall be maintained and remain active with the necessary budgetary support from the Commission as a data collection tool to provide the best scientific estimates available for bigeye tuna catch.
- f. The IVT, as described in paragraph 4 of Resolution C-25-01, shall be monitored for effectiveness by the IATTC staff.
- g. The IATTC staff shall conduct regular stock assessments of tropical tunas every three years, at which time stock status relative to reference points in paragraph 1.c. will be evaluated.
- h. When performing an update or benchmark stock assessment or an analysis of stock status indicators, IATTC staff shall consider the criteria for identification of exceptional circumstances (Annex II) and notify CPCs if any exceptional circumstance has occurred. If an exceptional circumstance is identified, CPCs shall follow the procedures outlined in paragraph 4 of Annex II.
- i. Before considering adjustments to bigeye catch limits for longline vessels in a permanent management procedure, the Commission shall adopt amendments to Resolution C-22-03, including:
 - i. Expanding the formal procedures for sharing transshipment data between RFMOs and enhance public disclosure of transshipment event information;
 - ii. Align the transshipment declaration to fully meet the Annex I of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Guidelines; and
 - iii. Amend C-14-02 to apply Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) requirements to all longline vessels engaged in at-sea transshipment.

HARVEST CONTROL RULES

- j. The harvest control rules (HCR) apply to purse seine fisheries harvesting tropical tunas in

the Convention Area. Fishing closure days will be used to maintain or adjust F.

- k. The HCR parameters produce a relationship between stock status and fishing mortality for each stock, as shown in Figure 1.
 - i. The HCR prescribes a fishing mortality rate for the subsequent management cycle (F_{NEXT}) based on the estimate of dSBR relative to $S_{control}$ at the end of the current management cycle.
 - ii. Fishing mortality remains at the level (F_{TARGET}) corresponding to the S_{TARGET} when dSBR is estimated to exceed the $S_{control}$ and decreases linearly to zero at zero biomass as a function of dSBR when it falls below $S_{control}$.
 - iii. When dSBR is estimated to be below the LRP with a probability greater than 50%, the IATTC shall adopt rebuilding measures that will rebuild dSBR to levels of at least the F_{TARGET} with a probability of at least 65 % within 10 years.
- l. The F_{NEXT} for each stock is first calculated as specified in paragraph 1.k and then translated into the stock-specific number of closure days for the next management period ($closure_{NEXT}$) using the estimated fishing mortality ($F_{CURRENT}$) and dSBR_{CURRENT} from the current assessment, the number of closure days for the current management period ($closure_{CURRENT}$) and the reference points specified in paragraph 1.c (F_{TARGET} and $S_{CONTROL}$) using the following relationships:

- i.
$$F_{NEXT} = F_{TARGET}, \text{ if } dSBR_{CURRENT} \geq S_{CONTROL}$$

- ii.
$$F_{NEXT} = F_{TARGET} \times \frac{dSBR_{CURRENT}}{S_{CONTROL}}, \text{ if } dSBR_{CURRENT} < S_{CONTROL}$$

- iii.
$$closure_{NEXT} = 365 - (365 - closure_{CURRENT}) \times \frac{F_{NEXT}}{F_{CURRENT}}$$

- m. The number of closure days in any management period will be based on the largest of the stock-specific number of closure days specified in paragraph 1.m, subject to the constraints in paragraph 1.o.
- n. The HCR imposes the following constraints on interannual management adjustments:
 - i. When dSBR for all stocks are estimated to be above $S_{control}$, the change in closure duration between successive management cycles is limited to ± 10 days.
 - ii. When dSBR for any stock is estimated to be below $S_{control}$, closure increases and decreases between successive management cycles are capped at 20 and 10 days, respectively.
 - iii. The minimum number of closure days in any management cycle would be 40 days.
- o. In the year of the relevant stock assessment(s), the IATTC will recommend adjustment to the existing Resolution, if need, to ensure fishing mortalities are at or below the levels set forth by this HCR using the latest stock assessments. Changes to fishing mortalities in accordance with the harvest control parameters (paragraph 1.k) shall apply between assessments starting the year after the stock assessments were completed, until the year of the next stock assessment that provides an estimate of dSBR.

OTHER PROVISIONS

2. A review of the performance of the interim management procedure by the IATTC scientific staff and SAC shall be completed by 2032. The aim of the review is to ensure that the interim management procedure is performing as expected and to determine whether there are conditions that justify its continuation, or that warrant: reconditioning the MSE operating models; retuning the existing management procedure; including new indices into a new management procedure; and/or considering alternate candidate management procedures or development of a new MSE framework. Based on those reviews and subsequent advice from the IATTC scientific staff, the IATTC shall decide on the implementation of a permanent management procedure for tropical tuna at its annual meeting in 2032.
 - a. Longline management measures shall be fully incorporated into a permanent management procedure.
 - b. From 2027 to 2032, the IATTC scientific staff shall continue to carry out work regarding:
 - i. Developing benchmark assessments for all stocks;
 - ii. Completing single species MSEs for yellowfin and skipjack;
 - iii. Conducting a multispecies MSE once multispecies management objectives have been defined; and
 - iv. Continue implementing the IATTC workplans on ecosystem-based fisheries management, ecosystem indicators and EcoCards, and the development of improved ecosystem indicators and tools to support management advice.
 - c. The *Ad Hoc* Working Group to Strengthen the Dialogue Among Scientists, Managers, and Other Stakeholders on Management Strategy Evaluation (MSED WG) shall meet at least annually to support the provisions of this paragraph, in line with its objectives and duties as outlined in Resolution C-24-08.
3. This Resolution replaces Resolution C-23-06.
4. The IATTC shall continue to promote, encourage, and insist on compatibility between the conservation and management measures adopted by the IATTC and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in their objectives and efficacy regarding the tropical tuna stocks.
5. The Director shall communicate this Resolution to the Secretariat of the WCPFC.

ANNEX I: HARVEST CONTROL RULE

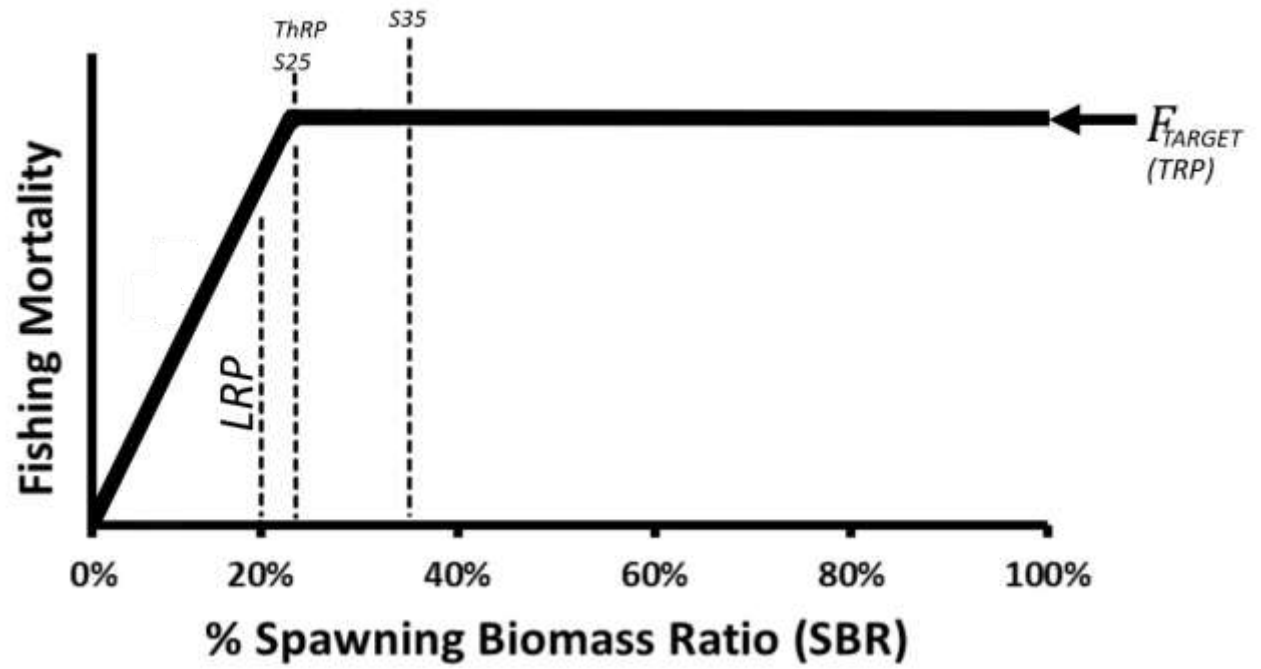


FIGURE. 1. Illustration of the harvest control rules with target reference point (TRP; F_{TARGET}), threshold reference point (ThRP; $S_{control}$), and limit reference point (LRP).

Annex II: Exceptional Circumstances

1. Exceptional circumstances are defined as the occurrence of events that are outside the range of scenarios considered for testing the MP. In the case of such events, it may be necessary to re-evaluate the MP or, in severe cases where there is considered to be a risk to the stock, take remedial action. Exceptional circumstances are not a mechanism for making regular, small adjustments to the MP, but rather should be invoked where, through an agreed process, the operation of the MP has been demonstrated to be highly risky or inappropriate. This Annex provides guidance on the process for determining whether exceptional circumstances exist and the necessary actions but does not provide firm definitions of all possible exceptional circumstances.

Process to determine if exceptional circumstances exist

2. IATTC scientific staff to implement and conduct a monitoring strategy and to advise the SAC and the Commission on the occurrence of exceptional circumstances annually, coincident with tropical tuna update or benchmark stock assessments, with an analysis of stock status indicators, or as needed.
3. Examples of what might constitute exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:

Biological and Operational Shifts

- a) **Recruitment:** Persistent low recruitment outside the range for which the MP was tested.
- b) **Operating Models:** Substantial improvements in knowledge, or new knowledge, concerning the dynamics of the population which would have an appreciable effect on the operating models used to test the MP.
- c) **Impact of Other fisheries:** Significant increases in the contribution of fisheries not affected by the MP impacting stock depletion.
- d) **Purse Seine Capacity:** Increases to purse seine capacity being granted.
- e) **Ecosystem considerations:** Including, but not limited to, significantly increased bycatch of species of special interest for the Commission, understood as those species or species groups specifically referred to in a dedicated Resolution. These include:
 - i. Resolution C-25-08, Annex 4: priority shark species and other Resolutions on sharks (C-25-09 C-19-06, C-11-10);
 - ii. Resolution C-15-04: mobulid rays;
 - iii. Resolutions C-19-04, C-04-07 on sea turtles.
- f) **LRP breached:** When dSBR is estimated to be below the LRP with a probability greater than 50%, the IATTC shall adopt rebuilding measures that will rebuild dSBR to levels of at least the F_{TARGET} with a probability of at least 65% within 10 years.
- g) **Longline global catch limit exceeded:** If longline catch exceeds its total limit, longline catch measures shall be re-evaluated.

Stock Assessment and Data Integrity

- h) **Update or benchmark assessments:** If any update or benchmark assessment used to evaluate the HCRs indicates that the MP is no longer appropriate. For example, if fishing mortality has increased substantially above the target level or if stock assessment biomass estimates are substantially below the range of simulated stock trajectories considered in the MP evaluations.
- i) **Annual basis:** If stock status indicators fall substantially outside historical ranges, suggesting the MP is no longer appropriate.

- j) **IVT measure is ineffective:** If the staff determines that the IVT measure no longer provides sufficient incentives for fleets to reduce catches of bigeye tuna in sets on floating objects, the MP shall be re-evaluated, including consideration of refinements to the incentives associated with the IVT. Potential trigger conditions include unusually high catches of bigeye tuna that cannot be explained solely by increased recruitment, or analyses indicating changes in fleet behavior that reduce the effectiveness of the measure (e.g. SAC-16 INF-S).
- k) **Data Unreliability:** The MP will be re-evaluated (reverting to 2024 levels) if the IPSP is discontinued, if staff determines that the main catch per unit (CPUE) index for one of the stocks has become unreliable, or if any of the following occur:
 - i. **Data Reporting:** Failure of reported catches and effort to be within an acceptable range around the levels indicated by the MP;
 - ii. **Data Inputs:** Complications with stock structures causing stock assessments to not be reliable for management advice or non-availability of other important input data (*i.e.*, from tagging programs) resulting in an inability to run the MP; or
 - iii. **Bigeye longline CPUE:** If the bigeye longline CPUE index falls below the [X%] (e.g., 20%) percentile of the distribution projected from the 2026 risk analysis under the adopted closures.

HCR Operational Limits

- l) **High HCR Fishing Mortality:** If F_{HCR} exceeds the average fishing mortality from 2019–2021 ($F_{2019-2021}$), the duration of the closure will be determined using $F_{2019-2021}$ instead of F_{HCR} .
- m) **Excessive fishing mortality:** If an increase in closure days calculated by the HCR in paragraph 1.l is more than 20 days.
- n) **Large # of closure days:** If the HCR results in a closure exceeding 72 days, additional alternative measures shall be considered.

Protocol for action in the event of exceptional circumstances

- 4. Having determined that there is evidence for exceptional circumstances, the IATTC scientific staff, in coordination with the SAC, will in the same year provide advice to the Commission including, but not limited to:
 - a. The nature and considered severity of the exceptional circumstances.
 - b. The necessary action required:
 - i. Based on the IATTC scientific staff's advice, the Commission shall decide on the alternative management actions to be taken. Unless the IATTC scientific staff advises that there is a sufficient basis to deviate, the Commission shall increase closure days in the purse seine fishery to at least 80 days for the following management period. In addition, as needed and appropriate, the IATTC scientific staff shall conduct a new stock assessment and/or provide advice on re-evaluating the MP and/or proposing new candidate MPs as soon as possible.